



THE VOTER

APRIL 2014 Vol. 41 No 4

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Co-President's Message

Happy Spring 2014 to all!

As is my custom, I spent the first day of spring outside on a lovely hike in the wood in search of the ephemeral spring wildflower. The weather was perfect, and this year's location was a hike down Sassafras Mountain in northwestern Pickens County to Laurel Valley. A colleague mentioned to me earlier in the week that March is Women's History Month and that March 8 is celebrated globally as *International Women's Day* to honor women activist who have made advances in economic, political and social equality for all. This certainly sounded like a topic that the League would embrace. A quick check on the LWVUS website revealed this: "As a champion of women's suffrage and a key player in international affairs, the League is pleased to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD), an annual occasion that honors the economic, political and social achievements of women past, present and future. Celebrated for over 100 years and recognized as a national holiday in a number of countries, IWD shares the League's commitment to promoting gender equality and global democracy."



As I stood at the top of Sassafras, the highest geographical peak in South Carolina, my thoughts ran to this topic and gave me something to muse over as I started on the trail. There are many women worldwide worthy of recognition, women who have worked diligently for equality, social justice, and environmental issues in their countries and whose names we may never know. In the US, as League members, we recognize Carrie Chapman Catt, the suffragist who started the League more than 90 years ago. Another League member worth of recognition is Eleanor Roosevelt, a long time League member and often considered one of the most influential woman of the 20th century. She was an advocate for social justice and worked diligently to strengthen women's role in politics. She is quoted as once saying, "I've always found that the best workers in a political party frequently are graduates of the League of Women Voters." On the State level, we have two very special League women worthy of recognition. Barbara Zia, past LWVSC President, and Peggy Appler, who served two terms as vice president for Community Relations on the League of Women Voters South Carolina State Board. These two women were named this month to the Board of Directors of LWVUS. Congratulations! It is an honor to all in the LWVSC to have two of their dedicated leaders named to the National Board.

About those wildflowers I went to seek out in the March woods on Sassafras Mountain. I didn't see too many as I was thinking more about the dedicated "wildflowers" in our own LWVCA group, the honorable women who chartered and built this League in the late 1960's and early '70's. Thank you so much for your leadership, dedication and continued activism in the LWVCA!

Yours in League,

Sandra

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633
www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tuesday, April 8 **BOARD MEETING**, Clemson City Hall, 5:30 pm
- Tuesday, April 15 **APRIL GENERAL MEETING:** Common Core Standards, Strom Thurmond Institute Auditorium, Clemson University, 7:30 pm
- Saturday, April 26 **LWVSC COUNCIL MEETING**, St. Paul's Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall, 1715 Bull Street, Columbia, SC, 9 am-3:30 pm
- Tuesday, April 29 **LWVCA ANNUAL MEETING**, Collins Ole Town, Central, SC, Social Time begins at 6:00 pm; Dinner at 6:30 pm followed by our Guest Speaker Mr. Reno Deaton on the SC Inland Port.

*The League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area cordially invites
members and their guests
to our Annual Meeting*

Tuesday, April 29, 2013

Wine at 6:00 p.m., Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Collins Ole Town, Central, S.C.

Come at 5:00 p.m. to see the Old Town buildings.

Reno Deaton,

Executive Director, Greer Development Corporation

will speak on the SC Inland Port

and especially how it might impact SC highways and transportation.

Dinner: \$25 per person

Buffet includes two choices of meat, several choices of vegetable, coffee, tea and dessert

Wine and other beverages provided by LWVCA volunteers (Please volunteer!)

We need your reservation no later than April 23.

Please email your reservation to Bill Hare at: wrhare@earthlink.net or phone him at 654-4417.

*Checks should be made out to LWVCA and either mailed to: P.O. Box 802, Clemson SC 29633
or paid at the door.*

LOCAL PROGRAM

Nominating Committee Report

Education

The LWVCA believes our schools should be adequately financed. Therefore, we support increased taxes, if necessary, for Pickens, Oconee and Anderson County schools.

- The LWVCA supports greater fiscal autonomy for the School Boards of Trustees in Pickens, Oconee and Anderson Counties.
- We support returning to the current structure of the Pickens County School Board with six area seats and three at-large seats.

The program planning meeting in January recommends that we change the last statement to “either one or three at large seats” in order to provide an odd number of members to reduce the likelihood of tie votes.

Growth Management

We recommend that we continue our growth management study focusing on the three county area and revise our current position in support of local comprehensive planning. Our draft growth management position is as follows:

We support intentional and collaborative growth management in the three county area (Anderson, Oconee, Pickens) of South Carolina. We encourage regular consultations among public agencies related to growth and development and local elected bodies—city councils, county councils, and school boards. We also encourage an open and frequent dialogue between those agencies and the general public on growth management. We support the concept of managing growth to preserve and enhance quality of life for all residents, old and new, through the effective and coordinated use of such land use management tools as conservation easements, purchase of development rights, development impact fees, and zoning where appropriate.

The Nominating Committee has prepared a slate of candidates who have agreed to serve in a leadership capacity for the upcoming term. The following nominees will be voted on at the Annual Meeting:

- Co-President – Janie Shipley 2014-2016
(The other Co-President is Sandra Gray, 2013-2015)
- VP - Program & Action – Holley Ulbrich 2014-2016
- Secretary – Liz Branstead 2014-2016
- Director – Ellen Magee 2014-2016
- Director – Cheryl Lee 2014-2016
- Director – Diana Stafford 2014-2016
- Director – Mary Ann McKenzie 2014-2015
- 2014 Nominating Committee: Elaine Laiewski, Chair, Ansley Fraser, Arlene Stewart

Submitted by the Nominating Committee: Reggie Turetzky, Chair, Ron Goldstein, Aleta Robinson

2014-2015 PROPOSED BUDGET

INCOME	
Dues	\$3840
Member Contributions	\$300
ED Fund Contributions	\$800
Fundraising – wine tasting	\$1479
Non-member contributions	\$250
Annual meeting	\$1000
DPO Publications Contributions	
TOTAL INCOME	\$7669
EXPENSES	
PMPUS	\$1984
PMPSC	\$960
Voter Printing	\$550
Voter Mailing	\$400
Web Site	\$225
Convention	\$2000
Board Tools	
President	\$100
Membership	\$100
Voter Ed/Services	\$100
DPO Publications	
Fundraising	\$100
Misc	\$100
Citizenship Award	\$50
Annual Meeting	\$1000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$7669

HELP WANTED

LWVCA seeks editor for foremost political, non-partisan Clemson-area newsletter. Published only 8 times/year. No writing skills necessary. Working knowledge of MS Word a plus. Will train. For more information, contact Linda or Reggie.

Common Core Standards April 15 at Strom Thurmond Institute

The April meeting of the League will be co-sponsored by the Jim Self Center on the Future at the Strom Thurmond Institute and will feature two experts on this topic, Dru James from the State Board of Education and Julie Fowler, Assistant Superintendent of Greenwood 51 School District. Donna London will moderate, and a principal and a teacher will respond to their presentation, followed by written questions from the audience. Common Core Standards for K-12 education have been controversial in South Carolina, so this meeting is a great opportunity to air some of the concerns, challenges, and misinformation on this new approach to education for our children. Details are in the accompanying article by Liz Branstead in this issue of the VOTER.

2014 LWVSC Council Meeting Saturday, April 26

Members and leaders are invited to attend the biennial meeting of the LWVSC Council of Leaders. At this council, you will learn about nuclear waste in SC, voting issues, and about the lawsuit alleging inadequate mental health treatment for prisoners held by the SC Department of Corrections. You will also hear from SC League policy specialists about what's happening in the 2014 state legislative session. The \$25 registration fee covers a light breakfast and lunch. Check the LWVSC website, www.lwvsc.org for more information. Call Paula at 868 2022 if you wish to carpool.

FORUM FOR PICKENS COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 4

Candidates Roy Costner, Bob Folkman and Brian Swords answered questions from the audience covering everything from funding and fiscal considerations to prayer in the schools and their priorities.



WINE TASTING FUNDRAISER A HUGE SUCCESS

The annual wine tasting event, assisted by Palmetto Spirits, was held at the Clemson Arts Center February 22, 2014. What has become the principal fund-raising tool for the LWVCA exceeded all previous events! Approximately fifty people attended. With some attendees making additional contributions and with some paying for attendance even though they could not be there, the total raised was \$1,525.

Once again, Dianne Haselton did an outstanding job of organizing the event and seeing that it was well advertised. The decorations, due primarily to Lib and Dave Crockett, were exquisite and the food was outstanding. Thanks to everyone for such a wide assortment!

We owe special thanks to Dianne who is “retiring for good” from this job! And we need someone(s) to move into the vacancy of what has proved to be our most successful fundraiser.

FORUM FOR SPECIAL ELECTION Oconee County Council District 3

Paul Cain (l) and Andy Inabinet (r) shared their views with an audience of approximately 80 on subjects ranging from financial autonomy of the school board to supporting a proposed tax increase for the county.



LEAGUE MEMBERS TEST VOTING MACHINE

In March, Leagues in Clemson and Columbia sent email to their membership, informing them of an opportunity to test voting machines for usability. This testing was done under a grant obtained by Dr. Juan Gilbert and the Human-Centered Computing Division at Clemson University.

We were able to provide 35 participants in Clemson and 27 in Columbia. The testing required participants to fill out a questionnaire, vote as instructed, and evaluate the ease with which voting tasks were accomplished. To our surprise, each participant was given a \$50 gift card for WalMart.

We know of no prior instance of usability testing of voting machines having been done systematically. (We have the impression that previous usability testing was done only by the manufacturer.)

The usability testing was an unusual and unprecedented opportunity for our members to experience hands-on voting on a machine other than the iVotronic. We hope that we will have opportunities to test other voting machines before South Carolina begins a serious search for replacement voting equipment.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

VOTING MACHINES DEVELOPING NEWS

A recent email message from Marci Andino of the SC State Elections Commission says that the SCEC plans to replace our current voting system in 2017. A Request For Proposal (RFP) is expected to be released in late 2015. No further information was available at press time.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

THE ACA AND THE HEALTH CARE LANDSCAPE

The Health Care Panel, our monthly meeting for March, explored the effect of implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) on our local hospital and our local free clinic and included experiences related by a Certified ACA Navigator and a Certified ACA Counselor.

Oconee Medical Center

Reba Cartee, VP for Quality and Physician Collaboration at Oconee Medical Center (OMC), described ways in which the physicians are working together to provide access to patient-centered, quality-based, cost effective care. Their efforts include use of electronic medical records, sharing data at the point of care and emphasizing the need to obtain preventive services. Mountain Lakes Access Health (MLAH) is a community program designed to provide low-income, uninsured adults with ACCESS to quality care and support services. The care coordination program professionals are dedicated to providing participants with a medical home and a care plan to address medical and social needs. As a result, OMC has seen a 71.74% reduction in emergency room utilization and a 73.81% reduction in inpatient admissions by MLAH participants. She cited Mountain Lakes Community Care, which is staffed by nurse practitioners, who help patients receive immediate healthcare services when they might have trouble getting in to see their own primary care physician.

As the ACA was being drafted, the American Hospital Association agreed to a \$155 billion dollar reduction in direct Medicare reimbursement and other payments over a period of 10 years in return for more patients to be covered by expanded Medicaid coverage. As we know, South Carolina did not expand Medicaid and that has caused hospitals to lose funding that they were promised. Oconee Medical Center will lose \$14 million in reimbursement between 2012 and 2019 as a result of health care reform. Also, the hospital provides \$30 Million annually in uncompensated care. The failure to expand Medicaid was called “disastrous,” particularly for rural hospitals.

Free and Reduced Price Clinics

Peter Sparks, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Clemson Free Clinic, described services to 1,000 citizens who earn less than 133% of the poverty level. If South Carolina had expanded Medicaid, the free clinics would not be needed because all their patients would be on Medicaid. The Clemson Free Clinic has an annual budget of \$75,000 with which it employs a part-time director and fills 3000 prescriptions.

Sparks told us that he came to the U.S. from England in 1977. The English government took over health care in 1948, so the idea that health care is not available to all is “alien” to him.

At Heritage Federally Qualified Health Center in Clemson patients are charged on a sliding scale, according to their ability to pay.

Navigators and Counselors

Shirley Hanson told us about her training to become a Navigator. First, there was a required HIPPPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996) training in best practices to protect a consumer’s personally identifiable information a Navigator might temporarily access, as well as the \$25,000 fine for every health privacy violation. A HIPPPAA test had to be passed. Next, DECO, the company sponsoring her to be a Navigator, required a background check, which took several weeks. Finally, after 40 hours of study and passing 13 tests with a grade of at least 85% correct on each, she could print out her certificate as a Certified ACA Navigator. She receives no pay.

To ensure privacy of individuals she counsels, she hands them all the notes she has taken when she leaves an appointment with them.

Working with individuals, completing an application, setting up an account on HealthCare.gov and purchasing an insurance option takes time. Hanson says that the shortest time she has spent with an individual was about 2 hours. The longest consisted of 3 different sessions, each about 3 hours in length. As we approach the March 31 deadline, everything is taking longer and working directly with the insurance company by phone may be preferable to using the web site. (continued on page 7)

(l to r) Reba Cartee, Peter Sparks and Shirley Hanson



COMMON CORE STANDARDS: WHAT IS IT? WILL IT WORK?

The “South Carolina State Board of Education adopted Common Core Standards in 2010. They did so after extensive review by the State Department of Education involving educator and stakeholders around the state.”¹ Each state has the option to adopt the standards or not. “More than half of the school districts in SC have already implemented state standards and the rest have begun the process.” Pickens County School District has adopted the Common Core Standards.

What other states have adopted the voluntary standards? “A total of 45 states, including South Carolina.”¹

What are the Common Core Standards? At this point they focus exclusively on developing mastery of core skills in reading/language arts and mathematics at each grade level, K-12.

Why set up standards? Standards are nothing new. Over the past 100+ years, school districts established requirements. Later states set up their own requirements. Finally, the No Child Left Behind program was the first to identify standards throughout the United States and to set goals for their implementation and success. Children, parents, and teachers are used to high school national testing programs such as the ACT, the PSAT, and the SAT, which measure and compare student’s language and mathematical abilities for admission to college and technical training programs.

There are at least three reasons to establish a national competency program: 1) Children and families move from state to state and can adjust more quickly to a new school district if there are national core standards in place. 2) As has been reported extensively in the national press, American students are falling behind other countries in the mastery of language arts and math (science standards will be identified later). This is hampering job success and our country’s ability to compete internationally. 3) Students need basic skills to enter the American workforce at any level (including entry level customer service and manufacturing jobs).

What Common Core Standards are not:

- This is not a federal program. This is not a program that comes from President Obama. The Standards were “developed by the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers” with input from teachers, parents, the community.
- Common Core Standards do NOT “tell teachers what to teach or how to teach it. They are standards, not a curriculum.”

“SB 300 and HB 3943, currently on the calendar for the 2013 legislative session, would void the states adoption of Common Core Standards and ban the Department of Education from enacting them.” There are a number of legislators who are opposed to implementing the Standards. Dr. Mick Zais, Superintendent of Education for SC, opposes Common Core.

– *submitted by Liz Branstead*

¹ LWV SC Voter, Vol. 63, Issue 2. Fall 2013

² Greg Oliver, *The Journal* . December 24, 2013, p A3

Health Care Landscape (continued from page 6)

The happy stories are of people who are able to buy health insurance for the first time. The more difficult stories are of people who don’t earn enough to receive subsidies from the ACA Marketplace. Because South Carolina chose not to expand Medicaid, these people are not eligible for anything. It’s difficult to see their sadness and frustration when they find out that there is no way they can afford health insurance.

Rosellen Alequire, an ACA Certified Counselor, joined the panel to describe some of her experiences. A single female earning \$14,000 annually was paying \$400/month for her health insurance. Alequire found her a plan for which she now pays less than \$100/month. Another example was a couple in their early 60s who were paying \$1500/month for their insurance. Alequire found them a plan for less than \$500/month. Those are the kind of successes that encourage Counselors and Navigators to keep working.

- *submitted by Eleanor Hare*

Clemson City Council 1st and 3rd Monday, 7:30 pm.
 Seneca City Council 2nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm.
 Pickens County Council 1st and 3rd Monday, 7:00 pm.
 Oconee County Council 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm.

Anderson County Council 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm
 Pickens County School Board 4th Monday, 7:30 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 _____

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.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

P. O. Box 802
 Clemson, SC 29633

[Recipient]

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4