



THE VOTER

December 2014 Vol. 41 No. 9

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Co-President's Message

Mid-term elections are behind us now and time to look forward to other League activities. Voter registration drives and forums are certainly synonymous with the LWV, but there are other issues to study. The League of Women Voters supports legislation that protects the environment and public health related to environmental issues. In January, we will look into foreign shipments of nuclear waste in South Carolina with a presentation by Suzanne Rhodes, a nuclear specialist with LWVSC. This is an important environmental concern for our state since one of the four low-level nuclear waste landfills in the US is located in Barnwell County, and there have been reports of leaks of the radioactive isotope tritium from the landfill into the ground water.



Looking into February, we will present a program on immigration. The League of Women Voters (LWVUS) believes that immigration policies should "promote reunification of immediate families; meet the economic, business and employment needs of the United States; and be responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises." This week, using executive action, President Obama announced he would allow over 4 million undocumented immigrants to remain in the US without fear of deportation and to apply for jobs as an undocumented worker in the US. This new policy is aimed at keeping families together and applies to illegal immigrants who have children that are US citizens. LWVUS President Elizabeth McNamara praised President Obama for taking this action saying it "is a positive step forward on immigration policy because it is a humanitarian effort aimed at families, but more needs to be done." Other upcoming programs in March and April will discuss corporate personhood and health care reform.

The LWV of the Clemson Area is community-minded and strives to provide informational programs on issues relevant to local citizens. If you are interested in any of these interesting program topics, please consider attending the meetings to learn more. Membership is open to both men and women, and if you are not a member of the LWV, please consider starting off the New Year by joining the League and helping us promote democracy in the Upstate of South Carolina!

Yours in League,

Sandra

Save the Date!
Wine Tasting, Sat., Feb 21,
6 - 8 p.m., Calhoun Bridge
Center Auditorium

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Co-President's Message	1
Calendar of Events	2
Holiday Party	2
The State of SC Public Schools	2
Your Membership Gives Us a Voice	2
Rec Flyers	2
Voting Snafu in Pendleton	3
After 21 years, a decision!	3
How States Can Help Undo Citizens United	3
Clemson City Council Forum	4
LEAD – Save the Date!	4
Public Testing of Ballot in Oconee County	4
HealthCare.gov: New Plans & Benefits	5
Medical Help for the Uninsured	5
Patriotic Partners – THANK YOU!	5
Book Review	6
Send a Letter to the Editor!	6
Observer Corps: Clemson City Council	7
Pickens County School Board	7
Board of Architectural Review	7
Observer Corp Schedule	8
Contribution Form	8

THE VOTER

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

Sandra Gray, Co-President
Janie Shipley, Co-President
Holley Ulbrich, VP/Program & Action
Diana Stafford, Secretary
Bill Hare, Treasurer

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Eleanor Hare, Webmaster
Cheryl Lee
Ellen Magee
Mary Ann McKenzie, Co-Chair P & A
Nicole Paluzzi
Mike Stafford, Chair Finance/Fundraising

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Paula Appling, VOTER Editor
Elaine Epstein, Voter Service Anderson Co
Elaine Laiewski, Nominating Comm Chair
Elinor Baron, VOTER Mailing

Photo Credits: Eleanor Hare, Mike Stafford

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tues, Dec 16	Holiday Party , OLLI, 7 p.m.
Thurs, Jan 8, 2015	Pickens County Legislative Delegation Annual Meeting , 5:30 p.m. The Carr Conference Center, West End Hall, 201 S. Fifth St., Easley
Jan ??	Oconee County Legislative Delegation Annual Meeting
Tues, Jan 13	BOARD MEETING , Clemson City Hall Community Room, 5 p.m.
Tues, Jan 20	GENERAL MEETING , Nuclear Waste with Suzanne Rhodes, OLLI, 7 p.m.
Wed, Jan 28	Panel Discussion on Ethics Reform , Columbia Chamber of Commerce Building, 6-8 p.m.
Sat, Jan 31	LEAD: League Education and Advocacy Day, Columbia, SC, details forthcoming

Refer to lwvclemsonarea.org for updates and current information

Holiday Party

Our annual holiday party will be held at the OLLI building at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, December 16th. Beverages will be provided by the Board. Members are asked to bring a holiday treat or appetizer to share. There is no formal program, but Bob Sorrells will treat us to a reading of that wonderful holiday classic, Dylan Thomas's A Child's Christmas in Wales.

Hope to see you there!

Your Membership Gives Us a Voice

Our memberships are counted by National LWV on January 31. Those numbers (local, state and national) determine how loud our voice is. Your renewal is most appreciated sooner rather than later. It gives the collective "US" less internal worry, so that we can spend time on what counts.

Please pay your dues.

Rec Flyers

The 2014 edition of the Rec Flyer is available! Many thanks go to Carol Kozma and Patty Warner for updating the Rec Flyer and to Carolina Realty for printing them. Contact Carol if you or your organization has a need for them.

The State of South Carolina Public Schools

Dr. Ken Weichel, retired principal of Clemson Elementary, gave an informative talk to the League on November 18th about the history of education funding and the financial condition of state of our local public schools. He also gave a brief overview of charter schools, virtual schools, home schooling, and Common Core.

Federal funding of local public schools appeared on the scene in response to Sputnik in 1957 as an effort was undertaken to strengthen science education. President Johnson expanded on that effort with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Other major legislation included President Bush's No Child Left Behind program as well as programs and funding for children with disabilities. With each new program, additional demands were made for state and local funding and for accountability. South Carolina had a difficult time meeting these demands. For example, a new federal program to cut out unhealthy snacks has cost many high schools as much as \$60,000 in revenue.

Continued on page 4 . . .



Claudette Bennett, Ken Weichel and Diana Stafford

Voting Snafu in Pendleton

Some Pendleton residents who voted absentee did not have an opportunity to vote on the local alcohol referendum. The referendum was not on the machine ballot and absentee voters had to separately request the ballot for the referendum in order to receive it.

The League was alerted when a voter, casting an in-person absentee ballot in Anderson, had to convince the poll worker that there was a referendum for Pendleton and she wanted to vote on it. After some delay, the poll workers in Anderson found a separate paper ballot and she voted.

Also, a Pendleton resident who received her absentee ballot by mail reported not having received the separate paper ballot for the referendum. How many Pendleton voters did not know about the referendum and were, therefore, unable to vote on it?

Katy Smith, Director of Anderson County Registration and Elections, wrote that "Every voter requesting an absentee ballot for this Pendleton special election is provided that ballot and our poll managers are prepared to follow the like on election day insuring that all voters have the opportunity to cast a ballot for both the General Election and Pendleton Special election who would like to do so."

Every Pendleton voter, including those who voted absentee, should have been provided with both the machine ballot and the referendum ballot. It is unreasonable to expect voters to know that they need more than one ballot. Every Pendleton voter, both absentee and in-person, should have been clearly told that they needed two separate ballots.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

After 21 years, a decision!

The South Carolina Supreme Court recently handed down a decision in favor of the plaintiff districts in an education funding case that has been dragging through the courts for 21 long years. All this time, the Nelson, Mullins and Riley law firm has been working *pro bono* to ensure that children have the opportunity to learn and develop to their full capabilities regardless of where they live in this state. The plaintiff districts and the defendant state of South Carolina must present the court with a mutually satisfactory resolution.

It was my great pleasure to testify on behalf of the plaintiffs in 2004 as an expert witness on education funding in South Carolina. Some of my more recent writing on the special (and spatial) challenges of rural districts was cited multiple times in the 3-2 decision.

There is a brief but significant opportunity to influence the way the state supports its public schools, so check out the newspaper reports on the Abbeville case and make sure others know of this opportunity to point things in a better direction. Sometimes we can make a difference!

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

How States Can Help Undo Citizens United

A Maryland state senator has drafted legislation that will put the brakes on corporate political spending. Our state could use the model created by Maryland State Senator Jamie Raskin to rein in spending on all elections by corporations based in that state. Part 3 of the "Shareholders United" Act is the key.

1. Corporations cannot spend any resources on political campaigns and candidates without showing that there has been a prior majority vote of shareholders authorizing political spending by management and expressing the partisan political preferences of the shareholders.

2. Any corporate political expenditures or contributions must be posted on the company website within 48 hours.

3. If a majority of a company's shares are owned by large institutional investors that cannot take political positions – like state and local pension funds, mutual funds, insurance companies, foundations, churches, and universities – then the corporation cannot make political expenditures or contributions.

4. Shareholders have the right to request a pro rata rebate for that portion of their investments spent by the corporation on any political expenditures and contributions they disagree with.

Please consider encouraging legislators to introduce the "Shareholders United" Act in South Carolina.

Clemson City Council Forum Well Attended

A capacity crowd attended the forum for candidates for Clemson City Council on Thursday, October 30, at the Clemson City Hall Council Chambers. Anna Simon moderated, posing questions from the audience to candidates Ray Brown, Jerry Chapman, June Hay, Tim Fowler, C. Martin Tiller and Jeremy Wright.

League members participating in the forum were Sandra Gray, Bill Hare, Charlotte Holmes, Cheryl Lee, Frances Plotnik, Janie Shipley, Mike Stafford and Patty Warner.



(l-r) Ray Brown, Jerry Chapman, Tim Fowler, June Hay, C. Martin Tiller, Jeremy Wright

Public Testing of Ballot in Oconee County

Joy Scharich, Director of Oconee County Registration and Elections, invited us to witness testing of the Oconee ballots on Monday, October 27.

Ms. Scharich showed us one of two M-100 scanners that are used to read paper ballots. She demonstrated how the scanner worked by scanning eight ballots that represented a variety of voter choices and showing us the tape produced by the scanner. (It was obvious that the ballots had been previously checked because we did not compare the ballots to the tape.) She also explained how the ballot information is communicated to the scanner and how the results of scanning the paper ballots are communicated to the master computer that summarizes and reports the election.

The process of ballot preparation and testing begins as soon as candidate filing is complete. Election directors test that the scanner correctly reads the ballot as soon as ballots are available, but this public demonstration is necessary to ensure transparency and public confidence.

Submitted by Rosellen Aleguire and Eleanor Hare

LEAD – Save the Date!

In place of the August gathering of the League clan and the February midweek legislative day, the state LWV is combining them into a day of information, inspiration, and networking to go forth and advocate on state League issues. The date is January 31st (Saturday), the place is Columbia, the price is low, the food and company are good, and the program is outstanding. Mike Shealy, executive director of the Senate Finance Committee, will be one of the main speakers. We will hear from two lobbyists and will be asking local leagues to share their experiences and concerns in program and action and in membership development. We will be carpooling to the meeting, so put it on your calendar and let Janie or Sandra know that you want to attend.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Weichel - Continued from page 2 . . .

All federal money, about 10-15 percent of total funding, is dedicated to specific uses and cannot be used for general operating expenses.

A major source of state funding is the Education Finance Act of 1977, but the General Assembly has not been fully funding it for quite a few years. The Educational Improvement Act, passed in 1985, increased the sales tax from four percent to five percent and dedicated the funds to improving specific areas such as reading. Act 388 took owner occupied property out of the tax base and only partially replaced the revenue with yet another penny of sales tax. Minor sources of funding include the lottery and funds from nuclear waste storage at Barnwell.

While the school board has limited ability to raise taxes, funding for new schools requires a bond issue and a referendum. An elementary school costs about \$15 million, a middle school about \$25 million, and a high school about \$60 million. On the operating side of the budget, Pickens County has been challenged by lagging tax revenue and cuts in state aid. The Pickens district pays low teacher salaries (\$500-\$3,000 less than many districts). Some budget options under consideration are a 4-day week, increased class sizes, and contracting services to private businesses.

Dr. Weichel concluded by reminding us that as a society, we must transmit our values to the next generation, and schools play an important role in that process. Our schools must deal with poverty, immigration problems, handicapped students, drugs, gangs, and many other challenges. Until we value education as much as we value a winning football program, things are not going to change.

Submitted by Cheryl Lee

HealthCare.gov: New Plans and Benefits

Before renewing your policy on HealthCare.gov, check out the new policies. The less expensive plans are actually cheaper than last year. Silver plans start at \$272/month (before subsidies).

The single most important feature of health insurance from an Exclusive Provider Organization¹ (EPO) is the list of providers in their network. Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Blue Choice and Consumers' Choice are EPO plans, which require that you use the doctors and hospitals in their networks. Out-of-network expenses are not covered.

Assurant Health², which uses the Aetna provider network, is a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO). PPO³ insurance allows use of out-of-network services, but benefits may be higher in-network than out-of-network.

Changes since last year include the addition of a fourth company selling insurance in our area, increased variety of plans and a small decrease in the price of the cheapest silver plans. Since subsidies are determined by the cost of the cheaper plans, subsidies in South Carolina will decrease by 4%.

¹ www.ehealthinsurance.com/health-plans/epo/

² Assurant's provider list can be found at aetna.com/asa

³ www.ehealthinsurance.com/health-plans/ppo

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Medical Help for the Uninsured

Many South Carolinians with incomes below 100% of the federal poverty level (\$11,670 for an individual and \$23,850 for a family of four) do not have the ability to pay for health care provided by private doctors and cannot receive subsidies to buy insurance provided by the Affordable Care Act. Two local agencies are attempting to meet much of their need.

The Clemson Free Clinic¹ was established to provide comprehensive health care to residents of Clemson, Central, Six Mile and Pendleton. Its clients are primarily those who would have been covered by expansion of Medicaid in the Affordable Care Act. The Rosa Clark Clinic² in Seneca provides similar services. In 2013 the Clemson Free Clinic had 5433 patient visits and filled 3397 prescriptions (all free). The Free Clinic relies heavily on volunteer medical personnel and local donations.

Foothills Community Healthcare³, a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), charges on a sliding scale based on household income and the number of people in the household and offers primary health care to residents of Pickens, Oconee and Anderson counties. About three fourths of Foothills clients are uninsured. The remaining quarter are evenly divided between Medicaid and Medicare. Foothills Community Healthcare accepts all forms of insurance.

SC Healthy Connections Checkup⁴, a new program of the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, will cover a once-every-two-years screening for diabetes, obesity, breast cancer, colorectal cancer, lung cancer, hepatitis C and mental health. This screening is available to South Carolinians who earn about \$22,500 or less and who are not eligible for full Medicaid or Medicare coverage.

SC Healthy Connections Checkup will not provide treatment for problems that are discovered. Those with incomes above the federal poverty level can receive treatment by signing up for insurance with the Affordable Care Act. Others may be able to receive treatment for some problems through the free clinics or Foothills Community Healthcare.

¹ 200 Clemson Blvd., Suite 1, Clemson, SC 29631-3023; (864) 654-8277; www.scfreeclinics.org/

² 210 South Oak Street Seneca, SC 29678; (864) 882-4664; nafclinics.org/clinics/rosa-clark-free-medical-clinic-association-inc

³ 1011 Tiger Blvd., Suite 400, Clemson, SC 29631; (864) 667-9414; www.heritagefqhc.org

⁴ www.thestate.com/2014/07/09/3553930/sc-healthy-connections-checkup.html

Submitted by Eleanor Hare



Patriotic Partners include Clemson Community Care (above) and Six Mile Elementary (below). Many thanks to these and other Pickens and Oconee County Schools for joining our efforts to get out the vote. A special Thank You to Seneca Mayor Dan Alexander for including the reminder to vote in the City of Seneca monthly newsletter.



Book Review: *The ALL NEW Don't Think of an Elephant* by George Lakoff

When Paula asked me to review the new, updated version of George Lakoff's *Don't Think of an Elephant*, I quickly downloaded the new edition and revisited one of my favorite thinkers and writers about how we influence public policy. Lakoff, Professor of Cognitive Science and Linguistics at the University of California at Berkeley, is a political progressive, and he writes from that perspective, but his insights about how people process new information in an existing conceptual framework helps us to communicate in ways that will also be useful for conservatives. He argues that most of us view our society through the framework of family systems, and two systems in particular: the strong father and the nurturing parent. Each system produces a consistent set of attitudes and opinions on public issues such as same-sex marriage, minimum wage, school vouchers and foreign policy.

The strong father believes in personal responsibility enforced by reward and punishment. Not giving people handouts offers a needed incentive to try harder. Government just gets in the way of encouraging personal responsibility by largely market-determined rewards and punishments. The nurturing parent also believes in personal responsibility, but believes it comes about by helping people to become independent and successful through support, encouragement, and opportunity. Nurturing parents are more empathetic and focused on fairness and justice. They believe that people can be persuaded by facts and reasoning to change their positions, and tend to neglect the importance of the context or framing within which ideas and facts are presented. In between are the bi-conceptuals, whose world view expresses elements of both family systems.

These are moral positions. The moral position of the strong father camp is one in which the self (and family) are of primary importance and others less so; it is less empathetic. The moral position of the nurturing parent camp is more empathetic, sometimes at the expense of self-interest. Those in the middle either have a healthy balance of empathy and self-interest or at least are willing to extend their concern to others—their extended family, their community, even their fellow citizens, but rarely to everyone. Lakoff estimates that about 40 percent of the population is strongly in one conceptual camp or the other with about 20 percent bi-conceptuals who

both attitudes and positions with from both camps. That group is the target for persuasion by both sides, because repeated exposure to persuasive argument can move them into one camp or another.

For those of us who try to influence public policy, there are some important insights in Lakoff's book. First, those in one camp can rarely penetrate the other except on highly specific issues, so most of the contested ground is occupied by the bi-conceptuals. Second, framing is important. Sometimes it can make inroads even among those on the opposite end of the spectrum, certainly among those in the middle, if you can find the right language in which to frame your argument. For example, taxes are framed by the right as a burden in need for relief, on the left as the price we willingly pay to meet the shared needs for public services and programs. When same sex marriage was all about sanctity of marriage, it led to all those constitutional amendments; reframed as freedom to marry and civil rights, the change in public attitudes was remarkable.

The book is rich in examples from the last two decades. Whether you are left, right, or in the middle, if you care about public policy, you should read this short but informative and even provocative book.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Influence Public Opinion with your Personal Letters to the Editor

Send a personal letter to the editor! Keep it to 250 words or less and focus on specifics. Send your letter to each paper individually.

letters@GREENVILLENEWS.com

bpadgett@GREENVILLENEWS.com

life@UPSTATETODAY.com

sbradley@UPSTATETODAY.com OR online to upstatetoday.com/comments/submit-a-letter-to-the-editor/letters@INDEPENDENTMAIL.com

KEOWEE COURIER/WESTMINSTER NEWS:
westnews@bellsouth.net

www.THEEASLEYPROGRESS.com/section/submitletter

PICKENSENTINEL.com/section/formeditor

POWDERSVILLEPOST.com/section/formeditor

Kudos to these Members:

Rosellen Aleguire, LTE, Anderson Independent, 10/21/2014 on **South Carolina is lacking**

Ken Marsh, LTE, Greenville News, 11/3/2014 on **Keep climate change in mind when voting Tuesday**

Cheryl Lee, LTE, Anderson Independent, 11/1/2014 on **School Funding**

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS: Board of Architectural Review 11/11; Clemson City Council Meeting 11/24/14; and Pickens County School Board 11/24/14

Board of Architectural Review, November 11, 2014

This meeting marked the first time citizens have had the opportunity to speak before BAR in a public session. The process involved signing up to speak before the public session began. Each person had a three minutes limit. Citizens were concerned about the only item on the agenda, the final review of the Duke Center Project. Comments ranged from why BAR was proceeding with a final review of this project when the Circuit Court had not ruled on the citizens' appeal, calling for a moratorium on the project to allow differing opinions and new ideas from CU architectural students to be digested, to one citizen berating the community at large for causing Tom Winkopp so much grief. BAR heard architects present changes to the project. Wayne Leftwich was the only member of BAR who expressed his concern of the south and north walls of the project. BAR unanimously (Gina McLellan was absent) approved the project conditional upon changing these walls.

Clemson City Council Meeting, November 24, 2014

In public session, Tal Slann, as a property manager, is concerned about the city staff's interpretation of the code that have resulted in him not being able to do his job without being sued.

In order to avoid a disconnect between council and boards, the city will post links from city council minutes to other board minutes. This change is a result of citizen input.

The council unanimously approved without discussion the first reading of 10 different ordinances to change the City of Clemson Zoning Ordinance. Reasons for changes included additions left out of the zoning rewrite, correcting typos, eliminating contradictory statements, adding language, clarifying details, etc.

Council set the date of December 15 at 7 pm for a public hearing for two proposed Zoning Text Amendments: Definition of Structure Height and Bufferyard & Screening between Nonresidential Uses in Commercial Districts.

Council passed the first reading to repeal the Prohibition of Sunday Alcohol Sales from Clemson City Code, approved spending \$52,498 to replace street lights on College Avenue and Sloan Street, and authorized Andy Blondeau to award the bid for the Berkley Dr. Pedestrian Bridge and Shared Use Path project to KCI in the amount of \$98,896.

Submitted by Linda Gahan

Highlights from the Pickens County School Board meeting, November 24

Discussion of a 5-year Capital Needs Plan to eliminate the current funding crisis centered around three plans:

1. Refinance current revenue bonds / no increase in millage / yield \$3.2 Million
2. Refinance current revenue bonds / increase 5 mills / yield \$4.8 Million
3. Refinance current revenue bonds / increase 10 mills / yield \$8.5 Million

Dr. Danny Merck told the standing-room-only audience "We don't want to just survive. \$11 Million would allow every school to stay open, but we can't have an extremist mindset. We are putting everything on the table."

Although no plans for school closings were presented at this meeting, there were references to possible closing of three elementary schools: A. R. Lewis, Holly Springs and Ambler. At least a dozen representatives of Ambler were present in bright turquoise t-shirts.

Two members of the public gave prayers during the period for public input and prayer was on the agenda, too.

The usual small, but ever-present, group who oppose any increase in taxes were there. But, there were also voices for protecting our schools. One person claimed that "ten years of no millage increases is fiscally reckless".

In other action, the Board created an ad hoc committee to draft a strategic plan. Dr. Henry Wilson, Dr. Danny Merck, Mr. Phillip Bowers, Mr. Alex Saitta and Dr. Brian Swords were appointed to this committee. A decision on which of the Capital Needs Plans to pursue will determine what actions the School Board can take. Mrs. Judy Edwards commented that, "When we know how much money we've got, we can see what we can do. You can't plan a budget until you know how much money you will have."

Mr. Alex Saitta disagreed with the direction the Board is taking, saying "There is not a financial crisis. ... The crisis is kind of being created. I don't like the whole process. We have enough money to run the schools." Dr. Henry Wilson said, "Survival is not good enough. I don't accept 'OK' and I'm going to vote for 'world class' education."

The Capital Needs Plan will be discussed at a meeting Dec. 1 and a final vote on it is expected Dec. 15.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare and Paula Appling

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

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