League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area



LEAGUE LINES

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2018/19 Calendar

Monday, December 3 - Board Meeting at 5:30 at Jason's Deli.

Friday, December 7 - LAST DAY TO APPLY TO SERVE ON THE RICHLAND COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION. See <u>page 7</u> for details.

Saturday, December 15 - Winter Social will take place at the beautiful home of Pat Forbis and Dr. Joel Duncan. You are invited to carpool and bring finger food refreshments – heavy hors d'oeuvres, desert, snacks, or a beverage of your choice. Our Winter Social is always an opportunity to spend time with your fellow League members and simultaneously get into the holiday spirit. An invitation with details will follow shortly.

Saturday, January 19 - LEAD, our Leadership, Education, and Advocacy Day, for all members in Columbia at the SC Education Association. More information will be in the January *League Lines*.

Saturday & Sunday, May 4-5 - Convention! Our biennial State Convention will be held this year in Charleston. Open to all members.



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VIEW FROM RIVER'S EDGE

Janelle Rivers

HIGHLIGHTS OF LWV COLUMBIA AREA "MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK" "EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY"

Although vote counting was a prolonged process in some places, the voters have spoken via the November 2018 elections. We have a new set of government officials who will start to make the effects of the election known in January 2019. The process exposed some weaknesses in procedures for voting. Clearly, there is more work for League members to do in promoting fair elections: access for all eligible voters; transparent processes; and efficient, accurate ballot-counting methods.



League members believe that the power of informed citizens to speak through voting is critical to defending the principles of good government. Service to voters is at the very core of the League's mission: "Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy." Providing relevant election information to potential voters is a big challenge for the League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area because we provide services across two counties with many kinds of communities.

The Columbia League has been fortunate to have three dedicated members who stepped up to provide leadership this year. **Barbara Beeler** has organized numerous voter registration and information activities. **Keller Barron** convened a very capable group to implement the national League's VOTE411.org software, providing information from candidates to voters via internet. **Cynthia Flynn** organized candidate forums that allowed citizens to hear directly from candidates.

The League runs on volunteer power, and its success depends on having leaders who can organize volunteers, be flexible in working with others, and cope with whatever happens. With guidance from these three leaders, our members have contributed time, talent, and energy to provide voters with critical information prior to the June primaries and in the run-up to the November election. Their accomplishments really shine in the area of empowering voters.

It's always a little risky to thank anyone publicly because we will, almost by necessity, omit names when so many people have participated. Every member who made a contact, helped to register voters, provided information, or told people about VOTE411, was important to the League's effort. We do want to recognize a few members who were especially important to these efforts.

Voter Registration and Information. Numerous League members helped to register voters and provide technical information about voting prior to the 2018 election. Barbara Beeler and her committee, consisting of Elizabeth Jones, Elizabeth McLendon, Sharon Ayling, Gladys Coles, and Rosa Bennett, organized volunteers who participated in at least 23 local events where the League provided literature and assistance to voters.

Be sure to read Barbara Beeler's article, which provides greater detail and a more comprehensive list of the volunteers who were integral to the success of an impressive list of voter registration and information events.

One group of Columbia League members, including Pat Mohr, Margaret Anne DuBose, Sharon Ayling, Sally Huguley, Lill Mood, Carol Robinson, Harriet Williams, and me, developed relationships with key leaders in four local districts to provide on-site assistance in high schools and at events for employees. League members collaborated with teachers and administrators in Lexington District One to develop and pilot test a PowerPoint presentation and teacher script that guided students through the steps for registering online, via scvotes.org. The Columbia League worked with the state organization of social studies coordinators to provide the finished products as resources that were distributed to all social studies coordinators in South Carolina for use with students in U.S. government and economics classes at the beginning of the academic year. Some of these students were eligible to register and vote in the primaries and the fall election because they would have reached their eighteenth birthday by the date of the November 6 election.

VOTE411. The Columbia Vote411 Committee began meeting in February in preparation for launching VOTE411 for the Primary and General Elections. Nine months later, they met November 13 to debrief and evaluate their work. The conclusion? They did a great job in capturing the participation of the candidates, the voters, and our members!

Statewide, 94,030 individuals visited the VOTE411 website 127,597 times. In the Midlands of Richland, Lexington, and Kershaw Counties, we provided information on 46 races with 102 candidates; 17,531 individuals visited the VOTE411 site 23,230 times!

Promoting VOTE411 via technology, in additional to traditional modes of publicity, was another successful strategy. One-third of the VOTE411 visits resulted from clicks on our ad placed on SCIway, the SC Information Highway. The Columbia League held a May press conference and sent press releases to media outlets. To increase VOTE411 visibility, LWV Columbia members distributed over 2,000 pieces of printed material promoting VOTE411.org at a variety of events in the Midlands.

411 Chair Keller Barron has a message for all members who helped to promote VOTE411.org:

"Thanks go to the stalwart members of the Committee: Melissa Augsburger, Debbie Dickinson, Elizabeth Jones, Anne Mellen with appreciation to all who assisted the Committee through consultation, telephone calls, publicity, Main Library Launch, Richland County School District One Board Forum, and Soda City. Also, volunteers Laurie Wilkie, Sue Berkowitz, Suzanne Rhodes, Sally Boyd, Rosa Bennett, Elizabeth McLendon, Lady June Cole, Janie White, Sharon Ayling, Jane McGregor, Ann Humphries, Rosemary Greco, JoAnne Day, Anita Baker, Susan Cirulli, Suzanne Axland. Nancy Bradley, Jim Bradley, Page Hodson, Dot Valentine, Maggie Bumgardner, Dolores Logan, Barbara Beeler, Glenda Bunce, Phillip Jones, John Agular, Candace Agular, Christina Goodwin, Pam Craig, Candy Coon, Janelle Rivers, and YOU."

Candidate Forums. Cynthia Flynn submitted a marvelous report detailing the activities for four school board forums and a collaborative effort with River Bluff High School to sponsor a debate for the U.S. House of Representatives District Two race. Review that debate at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-

Fkjs0qYg3LuRSE ZWva9mBGVlbHoDmO/view?usp=sharing



Charmaine Clowney and Laura Covington served as moderator and timekeeper, respectively, at the Richland District Two school board candidate forum. Janie White and Robin White worked with Cynthia Flynn to coordinate submission of questions from the audience.

The League held two school board candidate forums in Lexington District One. Organizers in that district chose to have citizens submit questions in advance via email. Cynthia Flynn moderated at Pelion High School with Sharon Ayling serving as timekeeper. At the Lexington High School event, the teacher forum group provided the moderator, and Angie Dodd Rabon served as timekeeper.

Pamela Craig moderated the Richland District One school board forum, where Christina Goodwin served as timekeeper, and Cynthia Flynn managed submission of audience questions. Overseeing voting literature tables for the four school board events gave me the opportunity to observe how beautifully our members managed the meetings.

River Bluff High School students drafted questions for the U.S. House District Two Congressional Debate. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-Fkjs0qYg3LuRSE_ZWva9mBGVlbHoDmO/view?usp=sharing.

The school invited Cynthia Flynn and me, along with West Columbia Council member Mike Green, to consult with the students to evaluate and refine the debate questions they had drafted. The League responded to the school's request for possible pre- and post-debate survey questions to encourage critical thinking and provided the students with 500 copies of *Debate Watching 101*, which was reformatted to allow note-taking during the debate. The original version of this resource, created by the national League of Women Voters, is posted at https://www.lwv.org/educating-voters/debate-watching-kit.

Some League members who put in huge amounts of time and energy prior to the recent election can't be listed as the League's volunteers because they chose to do that work

through the political parties on behalf of specific candidates. In fact, some League members were candidates themselves. There's plenty of room in the League for members who choose to participate in those ways, too.

Our members contribute in many ways—by registering voters, providing voter information, implementing and promoting VOTE411, offering candidate forums, working on campaigns, running for office themselves, and simply paying dues or making contributions to support the League's work. We all appreciate their efforts and understand the importance of their participation. Their work makes us all proud to be part of the effort to empower voters and defend democracy by being part of the League. *J.R.*

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VOTER REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION: The LWV is an organization that operates with volunteers. Not volunteer as in the dictionary entry—a "plant, not deliberately planted"—but rather a "person who freely offers to. . .undertake a task." Voter Registration is a

task that League members take very seriously.

When asked to volunteer, typical League members seems to mentally consider if it is something they care about, something they can do, and if they will be available to get it done. The folks who stepped up for Voter's Registration reckoned correctly, and, as a result, they did a fantastic job.

Margaret Anne DuBose previously managed our voter registration effort and her work was outstanding. She was also very generous in spending time and effort showing me the ropes. We continue to appreciate and respect her exceptional contributions to voter registration. She is a hard act to follow.

Our volunteers did a superior job this election season. It was great to meet the many people who come together to this task. Some were new to the process, but all were active, enthusiastic, and competent participants. Often our voter registration efforts target groups with low numbers of registered citizens. When that occurred, the volunteers stepped up and engaged citizens in discussion to encourage them to actually learn about the candidates and go to the polls and vote on election day, to encourage their family and friends to register and vote, and to help citizens with their questions about the electoral process. That's what happens when smart, educated, enthusiastic, and motivated people engage. The entire League and I are grateful for their work, given freely and expertly.

Elizabeth Jones is an example of a person who is totally committed to boosting the process of registration. She was out every possible day with her cart of registration forms, leaflets, and clipboard at any public gathering she could identify. She recruited her husband Phillip as a League member and volunteer. Her premise was simple: here's

a form, let's get you registered because it is important to democracy. Even when illness prevented her from doing registration for awhile, she continued as an excellent source of leads and encouragement to the rest of us. And talk about dedication—both Elizabeth Jones and Elizabeth McLendon missed our social because they independently decided it was more important to keep commitments to voter registration opportunities.

Other volunteers went to the schools in Richland and Lexington counties to register voters. A group of former teachers developed a teaching tool and encouraged the newly minted 18 year-olds to register, and also made inroads with the high school social studies programs. In addition, after some principals were encouraged by their teachers, we were invited back to evening school events to register not just students, but also their parents and teachers. Our volunteers stepped up—some doing registration for the first time.

Volunteers went to general community events where we sometimes had a table, sometimes used a cart of supplies and mingled with the crowd to engage them in conversation to help register and motivate voters. The Okra Strut, the Tasty Tomato Festival, Soda City Market, Eau Claire Unity Festival, Midlands Technical College, barber shops, churches, the homeless at Finlay Park, the Black Pride Fest at Forest Lake Park, Benedict University, Allen University, and the SC for ED Conference. We also participated in National Voter Registration Day, a media event co-sponsored by LWVUS again this year. In this case, the League collaborated with the Black Law Students' Association at USC, the USC student Constitutional Law Society, the Wardlaw School of Education at USC, and a Civic Educational event co-sponsored by the Women's Rights and Empowerment Network [WREN]. The League is fortunate to have many willing volunteers who devoted time and energy to these efforts.

Excitement and civic pride were palpable when our volunteers went to register newly naturalized citizens at Congaree National Park.

There were also volunteers who were not members of the League, including a student from Midland technical college, Mark Anderson, and Yolanda Ganong, Stephanie McCummings, Teshia McSwain, and Ashley Harrington.

So here is a list of some of our volunteers who served in many ways in tasks that were integral to the registration program. If I missed you, I'm sorry, it was unintentional.

John Aguiar, Keller Barron, James and Nancy Bradly, Duncan Buell, Maggie Bumgardner, Rosa Bennett, Anita Baker, Susan Cirulli, Gladys and Allen Coles, Pamela Craig, Debby Dickenson, Elaine and Stan Frick, Nina Grey, Ann Humphries, Melissa Augsburger, Sally Boyd, Glenda Bunce, Jessica Cross, Charmaine Clowney, Delores Logan, Candace Coon, JoAnne Day, Diane Falkenberry, Nancy Kreml, Marianne McGrath, Janelle Rivers, Pat Mohr, Ellen Yaghijian, Elizabeth and Phillip Jones, Elizabeth McClendon, Patty Munn, Lill Mood, Lala Steelman, Julie Sellers, Susan James, Laura Covington, Marcia Rowan, Janie White and Laura Woliver.

Six people also agreed to be on our Voter's Registration Advisory Committee: Elizabeth Jones, Elizabeth McLendon, Sharon Ayling, Gladys Coles, Rosa Bennett.

On behalf of the LWV, Columbia Area—THANK YOU!! Your work is greatly needed and appreciated. We look forward to seeing you all in the future.

We hope to continue this work and improve our services to underserved populations, in keeping with the National League's effort. And to those of you who haven't been involved directly, we hope you will be able to do so in the future. Barbara Beeler

VOLUNTEERS: - "EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY" Richland

Delegation is accepting applications for volunteers to serve on boards and commissions. Deadlines for submitting applications is Friday December 7. Airport, COMET Board of Directors, Columbia Area Mental Health Board, First Steps Board, Forestry Board, Foster Care Review Board, Election Commission, Medical Examiners Board, Midlands Regional Educational Center Board, Midlands Technical College Commission, Recreation Commission and Rich/Lexington Special Needs Board. Applications can be requested through rclegdel@rcgov.us .

We need a person committed to improving access to all voters in our county. Please help spread the word. We have a challenging few years ahead of us. We hope to work with the legislature for updated voting systems with PAPER backup. We will work to improve voter outreach, training for poll workers and access to satellite polling places so we are well-prepared for the 2020 elections



ALLISON TERRACIO - RICHLAND COUNTY COUNCIL DISTRICT 5 - HER LIFE & THE LEAGUE: In this final month of 2018, I'm happily and excitedly preparing to serve on Richland County Council. I'm also taking the weeks leading up to January to reflect back and practice gratitude for the experiences that led me to where I am now. Prior to the fall of 2016, I had only really ever participated in democracy as a voter. I was raised along with my sister by a single, working mom. She was at the polls every time they opened, and it seemed like she always brought us with her (though

I'm sure there were many times that she voted between getting off work, going to the grocery, and picking us up from childcare). I was surrounded by and raised by women who believed and behaved in a way that assured me that my future would be one of equality and opportunity.

After the elections of 2016, I knew I could no longer take for granted that someone else was going to take care of things for me. No one person could save women's reproductive rights, ensure that we would have fertile land and clean water and air, and challenge those in power when they only act in the interests of themselves and their friends. So, I took the first tiny step and drove to D. C. for the Women's March. I stayed with a friend from college, and we laughed at ourselves, poaching poster board and art

supplies from her children to make signs. I would have gone if I were the only one there, but I was surrounded by hundreds of thousands of people who all had the same idea. Of course, there were critics of the women who marched. "What are these women going to do? What do they think they accomplished by marching?"

Well, many of us came home and started to figure that out. We volunteered for important causes, went to a few more protests (or a lot!), and organized with other women in our communities. Thankfully, I made some great friends who kept talking about *the League*. I saw Lynn Teague at the State House, speaking up as an advocate for women's rights in committee hearings. I knew I needed to learn more and get involved. In short order, I became a member and became part of the Observer Corps. I attended Columbia City Council meetings, a joint City/County Council meeting, and started paying even more attention to local government. I would sit in the back and scribble notes or type them into my laptop and email my observations back to the League. Sitting in those meetings, I was able to shift my perception of local government from "something other people do" to "maybe I could do that."

When the United States pulled out of the Paris Climate Accord, I was inspired by the city and county leaders who stepped up to say that they would do their part to cut greenhouse emissions and promote energy efficiency. I was moved when the Columbia City Council voted to ban bump stocks late in 2017. I thought, "We can do so much for ourselves, right here at home."

And so, I decided to run. I am grateful for the words of encouragement I had along the way. Otherwise, I might not have been able to see myself as the person whose name is on the ballot or voting on an ordinance. I am grateful for the glasses of water offered to me by friends when I was out knocking doors on hot days in May and June before the primary. It's always the gestures of comfort that mean the most and help us keep going. When I close my eyes and envision myself walking into council chambers and taking a seat at the table, I can also see an Observer Corps member looking back at me. Maybe she'll be our next candidate. *A.T.*



NOVEMBER PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON UPDATE:

The cloudy weather was not a harbinger of the discussion for the luncheon because USC Professor Mark Tompkins, on the faculty since 1976, shined a light on the election results. Professor Tompkins, a graduate of Ohio State and the University of Minnesota, was introduced by Keller Barron.

At first, I thought he would only talk about South Carolina election results because he is presently working with the Hollings Special Collections Library on projects involving leaders in the state. However, we were provided with a plethora of information in the form of charts about the election results. The charts broke down information by states, voter turnout, and a host of other information tidbits. The League has added these charts to our website. Did you miss our public policy luncheon or just want a refresher

on Professor Tompkins's lecture? He was kind enough to share his slides with us, which you can soon view in two parts on our web site.

SC is one of the most stable states in terms of election results. The voting tends to be 55/45 favoring the Republicans. The Governor's race was a 54/46 split. Democrats in SC can be found in the Midlands and along the I-95 corridor where many of the Low-Country's Black communities are located. The Black population in SC is approximately 28%.

There are four issues that affect voting, starting with the **long ballot**. In South Carolina, most analysts believe that there are too many state-wide offices listed on the ballot. In many cases, the public is not directly interested in the candidates, or lack the necessary information to allow them to make a knowledgeable choice. At the state level in South Carolina, citizens vote for Governor/Lt. Governor,* Attorney General, Secretary of State, Agriculture Commissioner, Treasurer, and Superintendent of Education.** This list does not include those candidates chosen to represent us in Washington, on city and county councils, or local school boards and commissions. Down ballot, fewer people vote. For example, almost 1.7 million votes were cast for Governor but only 1.3 million for the Commissioner of Agriculture.

Gerrymandering is another issue that affects election results. Every ten years, after the census, districts are supposed to be redrawn to represent population changes. This state process has now become a situation where SC representatives select their voters. A drive to establish independent commissions to draw district lines is now being supported throughout the country. In SC, 65% of the population supports an independent commission.

Convenient access to register and to vote affects participation. In SC, we do not have early voting. SC has absentee voting, meaning voters have to meet certain criteria in order to have the opportunity to vote before Election Day. Voter ID is another constraint placed on SC voters —without a specified ID, citizens cannot vote. State employees have a state-issued ID, but that will not suffice, even though that same state-issued ID will allow access to state office buildings. In many states, various types of constraints are used to limit voting on one side or the other. Repeated purging of files is another way of limiting voter access. Convenience would improve voter turnout in every election. Sometimes a particular policy issue is on the ballot to draw people to the polls. The easiest places to vote are Oregon, Colorado, California, North Dakota, and Iowa.

Technology is the final issue that affects voting: the **technology of voting machines**. The number of properly working machines can affect the length of time a person might have to wait in line. The average voting time in SC is approximately 19 minutes. SC will replace its voting machines. LWV member Duncan Buell wrote an article recently here recommending the new machines have human-readable paper ballots (not bar codes) that can be scanned at the precinct.

A few comments on the national level: The original projection was that the House would be evenly divided with Democrats having a slight edge. At the time of Mark's

presentation, 228 seats were Democratic and 198 Republican. Youth, women, and Latino (not to include Cubans in Florida) voters made the difference. There is a distinct voting difference between urban and rural areas.

This election has put more women in office than ever before, and the diversity of this group, I hope, will help to change the attitudes of others in Congress. They will be forced to face issues they probably did not care to consider before because of possible blowback. Now that many groups are represented, those with holding power in Congress will have to confront their new colleagues directly. But I have little hope; elected officials have been able to look into the faces of the parents of Sandy Hook victims and ignore them.

Finally, the three most important issues in this election were healthcare, economy, and immigration, in that order. Pam Craig

- *Note that this is the first year the Governor and Lt. Governor ran on the same ballot. In previous years we voted for each position separately.
- **A referendum on the ballot this year was to decide if the Superintendent of Education should be appointed by the Governor. That referendum failed.

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FAST FACTS - THE VOTING MACHINES WE NEED SHOULD PROVIDE BALLOTS THAT:

Are hand-marked paper ballots

Can be read by the voter (not from bar codes)

Are scanned at the precinct

MORE ON OUR VOTING MACHINES: South Carolina will soon invest in new voting machines, and we need to be sure that they are the kind that will best protect the integrity of our votes. League members Duncan Buell, USC Professor of Computer Science and Engineering, and Eleanor Hare, retired Clemson Professor of Mathematics/Computer Science, have been working diligently to encourage a wise choice.

According to these experts (see a recent article by Duncan Buell here), we should not purchase more voting computers such as the current iVotronics or the newer BMD (ballot-marking device) computers, but should change to new-generation of hand-marked paper ballots with optical scanners for the paper. (In addition, one BMD would be needed for each precinct to meet ADA accessibility requirements.)

Not only are these systems more secure and faster (shorter lines at polling places!), but also much less expensive to purchase (approximately \$25 million as opposed to over \$60 million).

On the new-generation paper ballots, the voter can see what information the machine is reading and preserve the record. The voter's choices are not being tallied from a bar code that the voter can't understand and verify (as has been the case with BMDs). These machines also cannot alter the votes later. Fast optical scanners record the votes, which speeds up the whole process. Additionally, if lines are long, it is very easy to set up additional stations.

South Carolina is one of only three states still entirely dependent on DREs (Direct Recording Electronic computers). New York, the New England states, most of the Midwest, New Mexico, and almost all counties in Virginia use hand-marked paper ballots. Pennsylvania is in the process of converting.

Rep. Kirkman Finlay and a bipartisan group of legislators have become increasingly supportive of using hand-marked paper ballots, scanned at the precinct. So, tell your legislators, tell your neighbors, and stay tuned to the LWVSC web site. http://www.lwvsc.org/votingtechnology.html

We're not talking about the split between Republicans and Democrats, nor the differences between the Senate and House. The big divide is between the people of South Carolina and the General Assembly on the issue of **redistricting**.

The State newspaper recently reported on a Winthrop poll showing that

- -65% of South Carolinians want an **independent panel** to draw the lines of legislative districts in the redistricting process following the 2020 census; these South Carolinians oppose the use of partisan criteria to draw lines.
- -80% want districts drawn to reflect natural communities.

Rep. Gary McClary will introduce a bill in the upcoming session to change the process that currently allows legislators to choose their own voters by drawing lines to include the maximum number of people who vote for their own party

Help Spread the Word! Please talk to your representatives and senators and tell them:

- We want an independent redistricting state commission **and** we want criteria that exclude partisan and incumbent protection.
- A better system of redistricting is crucial to our democracy

"Stop the Gerrymander" bumper sticker from LWVSC. http://www.lwvsc.org/Redistricting.html#sticker

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Websites:

National: www.lwv.org/

State: http://lwvsc.org/

Columbia: www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Facebook: To see our Facebook Page:

- 1. Go to YOUR Facebook page and begin typing "League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area" in the search box until a list pops up.
- 2. Click on the name **League of Women** Voters of Columbia, SC with the familiar blue LWV Logo on the left.

That's it!

Twitter:

1. Go to YOUR Twitter account and search for the League of Women Voters Columbia Area and connect.

Facebook and Twitter email address:

@LWVColumbiaSC



Columbia City Council

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM City Hall 1737 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201

Check website at www.columbiasc.net

for more information.



Lexington County Council

Meet: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM 2nd Floor County

Administration Building 212 South Lake

Drive Lexington, SC 29072

For confirmation of meeting dates, please call 785-8103 or check website www.lex-

co.com



Richland County Council

Meet: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM 2nd Floor County

Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29202.

For more information, please contact the Clerk of Council Office @ (803) 576-2060

www.richlandonline.com

