

President's Message

There are many congratulations to go around for a wildly successful January, to kick off what promises to be a busy 2008 for the LWVCA! You will be reading reports in this newsletter on the wrap-up of the Immigration Study, the first "study" undertaken by LWVUS in many years. The kick-off for the national Focus the Nation event was chaired by Bea Bailey with Steve Johnson and Catherine Mobley serving on the Planning Committee along with many other individuals. We were pleased to have Barbara Zia, President of LWVSC from Charleston, participate in Focus the Nation, a nationwide effort to bring attention to solutions to global warming. She did an outstanding job of moderating the panel discussion which featured student leaders directing questions to government, business and non-profit leaders addressing environmental and global warming issues. At the celebration of our 40th Anniversary, we were honored with comments and presentations by Senator Thomas Alexander, Mayor Larry Abernethy, LWVSC President Barbara Zia, as well as past presidents of the LWVCA.

We are reminded, on the home page of our website (<http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/>) that "Democracy is not a spectator sport"! Jan Marsh takes this to heart -- she is in the forefront of the campaign to expand 4-year-old kindergarten to all at-risk children in SC by 2012-2013. On January 24, the Senate Sub-committee on K-12 Education approved S 815 which includes the 4K expansion, and this bill will now go to the Senate Education Committee. Jan prepared testimony which was presented to the Sub-committee by Gladys Cole, a Board member of the Columbia LWV. In the testimony, Jan cited a State Department of Education report, *What is a Penny Buying for South Carolina* (12/06) which provides "ample evidence that SC children who have participated in 4K show benefits into the 6th and 7th grade." A report from the Governor's Workforce and Education Task Force, *Pathways to Prosperity* (10/2001) projects that in the next decade "65% of SC jobs will require a 2-year, post-secondary degree, but only 32% of 9th graders will pursue the 2-year degree. Furthermore, 40% of 9th graders will pursue an unskilled job but only 15% of jobs will be considered unskilled." We commend Jan for her leadership in this important area of early childhood education. When she sends an alert that further action will take place on S 815, we hope that you will contact your Senator to support this legislation.

~ Janie Shipley, LWVCA President



Some of the LWVCA Charter Members, enjoying the 40th anniversary celebration with LWVSC President Barbara Zia (l. to r.: Ada Lou Steirer, Eleanor Hare, Ellen Reneke, Barbara Zia, Holley Ulbrich, and Berniece Holt).

***Join Us for
Legislative Advocacy Day!***

Have you been wondering how you can get more involved in League activities? Please join us to go to Columbia on February 19 for *Legislative Advocacy Day!* This is a day devoted to education and advocacy on public education issues. Sessions will deal with education funding, early childhood education and improving public education. The keynote presentation at the luncheon will address effective strategies for taking action – which will prepare us for going to visit our legislators in the afternoon! In addition, we may have time to attend an afternoon committee or sub-committee meeting.

When: Tuesday, February 19, 2008; 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Where: Marriott Hotel, 1200 Hampton Street, Columbia SC

How to travel: Several cars from Clemson will travel to the conference. If you would like to carpool, please contact Janie Shipley (885.1967 or janrel@mindspring.com)

Registration: Advance registration of \$35 is due by February 12; on-site registration is \$40. Each member may send in his/her registration using the form you received in the mail (in your LWVSC newsletter (or contact Janie Shipley for another form).

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SAVE THE DATE, April 1, 2008, another opportunity for advocacy. The League of Women Voters Environmental Lobby Day will be held in Columbia on Tuesday, April 1; 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Briefings will be given on top legislative environmental issues and conservation lobbyists will be on hand to answer questions. The afternoon will focus on meetings with legislators and committee meetings. For more information, contact Janie Shipley.

***The LWVCA Celebrates 40 Years of
“Making Democracy Work”!***

We had a glorious 40th anniversary party at the Calhoun Bridge Center in Clemson on Saturday, January 26th. About 35 people enjoyed wine and refreshments, memorabilia and balloons and reminiscences by charter members and past presidents and some very kind words from Senator Thomas Alexander and Mayor Larry Abernathy. Senator Alexander recognized our 40th anniversary with a Senate proclamation, which was bestowed on LWVCA. As stated on the proclamation: “in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Clemson Area League of Women Voters and in recognition of your dedicated service to the citizens of our community, the State of South Carolina and the United States of America, the South Carolina State Senate would like to congratulate and commend your outstanding service.” Mayor Abernathy commended our stands on critical issues. He has always been a big supporter of our League. We were also honored to have our state president, Barbara Zia, join us for this special occasion. Barbara summarized the important roles played by our members at both the local and state level. The five charter members--Ada Lou Steirer, Berniece Holt, Ellen Reneke, Eleanor Hare and Holley Ulbrich--planned the event, with help from Dianne Haselton and Janie Shipley. We five are all looking forward to the 50th, when we become life members and never have to pay dues again!

~ *Submitted by Carol Kozma and Holley Ulbrich*



Senator Thomas Alexander and Jan Marsh (LWVCA), enjoying the anniversary celebration.

***Memories 40 years in the making:
The History of LWVCA***

Below (and in the next several issues of the VOTER) you will find some reflections from some of our charter members. We hope you will be inspired by their dedication to and memories of the LWVCA!

"The League and I: Reflections from a charter member"~ Submitted by Ellen Reneke: My introduction to the League of Women Voters came in 1965 while I was living in Newberry. Three members of the State Board--Elizabeth Moore, Dot Yaghjian and Keller Baumgardner Barron--came to Newberry to explore the possibility of establishing a League there. Nothing came of the meeting, but I was hooked! These were women I wanted to be like when I grew up!

When, in January 1968, I saw a notice in the window of Lynch's Pharmacy (now the Hallmark Store) about an organizational meeting for a Clemson League of Women Voters to be held in the meeting room of Fort Hill Savings & Loan (now BB&T), it was a no-brainer. On the appointed evening I was there, check book in hand. And the rest, as they say, is history.

The main reason I joined the League was because of the people, and I've not been disappointed. In the past 40 years, I've had the privilege of working with great women on both the local and state boards. I've had the opportunity to study and discuss a variety of local, state and national issues in a "civilized" environment; to attend three national conventions (awesome!); and to work for the cause of good government along with some amazing folks. And I've been blessed to count many of them as friends.

Thanks for the memories! Time to get started on the next 40 years!

A Reflection from Berniece Holt: Are we really 40 years old? Our youngest child, Hamilton, our first and only son, was just 4 months old at that time. Holley and I were pregnant together and pushed our babies in their prams as research and work was underway to meet requirements to become a local LWV.

Between my four pregnancies and my faculty wife responsibilities I worked a "flex-time" schedule in the Special Collections unit of Cooper Library. This was a rare work arrangement for a woman "way back" then, to be given this special consideration; however, my special status did not last when it came to my voting rights. Upon our arrival in Clemson, Albert was given the right to vote immediately because he was a professional educator. I could not vote until I met residency requirements.

We moved twice from one location to another, across the highway from Pickens County into Oconee County and back again. I was disenfranchised, and could not vote, until I could restore my legal residency. Earlier, when we went to Nashville, to attend Vanderbilt graduate school, I was also disenfranchised.

Imagine my delight when I could help to start a chapter of The League of Women Voters to help work on problems such as this! Coming here from "radical UNC-CH" we were destined to become activists. We gained some earned notoriety for our inter-racial activities which included founding the Clemson Child Development Center and forming one of the largest bi-racial Chapters of the SC Council on Human Relations.

It is understandable that some citizen/business men worried that I, "radical" Berniece Holt, might give our noble LWV a "black eye" or even cause it to fail. One of those nice men became a very good friend of mine and a great citizen supporter of our League.

***“Up Close and Personal” with
Pickens County Legislators:
LWVCA Presentation
to the Pickens County Delegation***

On January 21, Aleta Robinson attended the open meeting of the legislators from Pickens County, representing the League. We were on the agenda, along with the Foster Care Review Board and Guardian ad Litem for Pickens County. The purpose of these hearings is to meet the legislators and for them to hear citizens' concerns about various policy issues. The League's actual presentation can be found after this article.

At this meeting, four individuals gave formal presentations, including Aleta Robinson of LWV. The hearing was then opened to the public. The issues were varied and personal, including immigration, land use and the state's purchasing of private land for preservation, golf course encroachment on a pristine trout stream, the Pickens County Board of Disabilities, nursing home practices in the county, and school innovations. It was a good meeting, which lasted for two hours, after which everyone ran out to find dinner!

The big news from the delegation came after Aleta's presentation. Senator Larry Martin spoke to the group about the latest problems with the I votronic voting machines used by SC. **Sen. Martin announced that it was his understanding that the I votronic machines could not be modified to produce a voter-verified paper trail. He said he is in favor of the paper trail and will recommend it the next time the state purchases new machines!**

Each year the legislators in every county hold a public hearing for all citizens; the meetings are always interesting and enlightening. This one was no exception. You are urged to attend these meetings with other Leaguers, to support the League in this important effort, and to take the opportunity to meet your legislators to ensure your voice is heard.

~ Submitted by Aleta Robinson

**LWVCA Statement to the
Pickens County Legislative Delegation
January 21, 2008**

The following statement was read by Aleta Robinson to the Pickens County Delegation:

I am Aleta Robinson, a member of the board of directors of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area, which serves Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson Counties. The League is a nonpartisan organization encouraging active and informed citizen participation in government at all levels. Our League, which currently has 68 members, has been actively engaged in voter education and registration and study and action on public issues in this area for forty years. As part of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina, we study and advocate on statewide issues. Among our priorities this year are education funding, safeguarding the voting process, and safeguarding air quality.

We know that you are facing a difficult budget year with likely budget cuts unless economic conditions improve rapidly. However, we do urge you to proceed with expanding 4K funding for our young at-risk children to give them a fair start on their journey to becoming productive and responsible adult citizens. It's an investment with a very big payoff down the road. We also urge you to look at some of the unintended effects of Act 388 in terms of redistribution of state aid to school districts and make some adjustments. The Index of Taxpaying Ability for EFA no longer measures ability to raise revenue. The State Department of Education and the Department of Revenue have some good ideas about how it may be adjusted to ensure fair distribution of EFA funds. We also urge you to give attention to streamlining and simplifying our complex patchwork of education funding sources so that local districts have more resources and more flexibility in using them to meet diverse local needs.

The LWVSC, and the LWVCA in particular, remain concerned about the safety and accuracy of the voting count that we get from our current

IvoTronic voting machines. Other states have abandoned their use in favor of something that provides a voter-verified paper trail. Voting is an important act of civic participation. We want our citizens to feel confident that their votes are being recorded and counted accurately.

The South Carolina League has always paid close attention to issues of environmental protection. As our population grows, we are increasingly challenged to protect air and water quality. One of the biggest issues on the agenda this year is the proposed coal power plant in Florence County to be built by our state-owned Santee-Cooper electric utility. This plant will have a significant negative effect on air quality, particularly in mercury emissions. We urge you to investigate this project and join in the opposition to this plant.

~ *Submitted by Aleta Robinson*

***Program and Action Notes:
LWVCA Events and Happenings***

January has been a very busy month for the Program and Action Committee, which not only led the immigration consensus meeting and the program planning meeting, but also was involved in planning the 40th anniversary celebration and preparing the statement to the Pickens and Oconee County Delegations (see Aleta's summary of the Pickens meeting just prior to this article). About 20 people participated in the second of the two consensus meetings on immigration. The first meeting dealt primarily with legal immigrants and what criteria should be used to set priorities, while the second covered several topics, including restricting illegal immigration, developing appropriate policies toward illegal immigrants already here, and identifying general issues of U.S. policy that affect conditions in other countries that result in increased immigration. Both discussions were lively and thoughtful, including the usual complaints about the wording of the questions! Eleanor Hare has submitted our

consensus to LWVUS, where it will be combined with others to craft a position on immigration. Further discussion on immigration will also take place at State Council in April.

Only eight of us showed up on a cold and rainy Tuesday late afternoon on January 23rd for potluck and program planning. We agreed to retain all national positions and recommended revisiting both the trade position and the health care position. Our recommended action priorities for 2008-2010 are (in order): global climate change, campaign finance reform, direct election of the president, water resources, and health care. We also affirmed our existing position on education, recommended continuing the growth management study, and agreed that Pickens County School Board should return to its nine member structure of six area representative and three at large in order to provide more citizen access (get to vote for four rather than one), to provide a mix of area and countywide perspectives and to ensure representation of growing areas of the county between censuses. Local recommendations will go to the board and then to our annual meeting in April for ratification.

Growth management is on the radar screen at last! Our program for February 19th is on growth management. Holley Ulbrich and Donna London have just completed a study of areas with rapid residential growth in South Carolina (along the coast, around the midlands, and south of Charlotte) and will present some findings on the impact of this growth on local government revenue and services, quality of life, and the local economy. We will also plan for future meetings in which we discuss growth-related issues specifically for Pickens, Oconee and Anderson Counties.

Our third book discussion is also on the calendar for Saturday, February 16th. We will discuss Eleanor Clift's book *Founding Sisters and the 19th Amendment*. Join us for discussion and a brown bag lunch at 12:00 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Fifteen people have copies of the book if you need to borrow one.

~*Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

***LWVCA Membership:
Welcome to Our New Members!***

As of February 1, the membership roster for 2008 lists 73 members. See the enclosed membership roster; we hope you find this useful as you seek ways to get involved with the LWVCA. We have lost several members, due to their moving, health issues, and personal reasons. We will miss these colleagues and friends and wish them well.

Several members have joined during the year but mostly since August and the Membership Luncheon in September. It has been an exciting membership drive; we thank our members for helping to recruit friends and colleagues at work. We welcome the new members and look forward to a good year together. Please join us in welcoming these members to the LWVCA: Michelle Leanne Chin, Rachel Estep, Lewis Fitch, Sandra Gray, June Hay, JoAnn Johnson, Fran Kaiser, Robin Kimbrough-Melton, Ken Marsh, Lyn Norton, Elizabeth Owens, Michael Stafford, Arlene Stewart, and Boo Wilson.

In future editions of the VOTER we hope to feature a “story” of an existing Leaguer and a blurb about a new member. Reading these and attending regular meetings will help us to get acquainted with all the membership.

~ ***Submitted by Della Baker and Aleta Robinson, Membership Co-Chairs***

Civic Education in High School

Della Baker and Elaine Epstein plan to visit senior history/civics classes in Anderson high schools during fall semester to represent the LWV and to encourage voting in the November election. They made a recent presentation to officials in Anderson School District 5, which includes three high schools. District administrators encouraged them to return in September to register students who are not yet registered to vote, and to encourage the students to participate in the democratic process. ~ ***Submitted by Elaine Epstein and Della Baker***

***We Need Your Donations!
LWVCA Plants and Books Yard Sale
Saturday, March 29, 2008
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
8:00 a.m. – 12:00 Noon***

Well, it’s THAT TIME again! Time to start preparing for the LWVCA’s spring “Plants and Books” yard sale! We need donations and help:

* Do you have a green thumb? If so, ***start your seedlings now!*** We will be selling plants, bulbs, shrubs, etc. at the yard sale.

* Do you have a brown thumb? We can still use your donations! ***We are looking for any yard and garden items: planters, shovels, rakes, lawn mowers, pots, trowels, garden ornaments, etc.***

* Finally, we need ***books, books and more books!*** Consider donating your books to the yard sale!

We will also need volunteers to help out at the actual yard sale. More details will be provided in an upcoming newsletter. In the meantime, get some potting soil and seeds and start those seedlings! Call Laura Georgi (654-8388) or Ellen Reneke (654-4803) if you can help out in any way.

***Welcome to a new member,
JoAnn Johnson!***

My name is JoAnn Johnson. I have lived in the area for 5 years and came here from the west coast. I am the mother of four wonderful girls, ages 16, 7, 4 and 1. I am married and am the Director of Corporate Relations for Southern Wesleyan University. I am active in my church and I joined the LWV to better connect with our wonderful community.

~***Submitted by JoAnn Johnson***

Editor’s Note: What is your “League Story”? Each month we’d like to feature a story or two. ***This is an excellent way for us to get to know one another, albeit through print, rather than in person (we can save that for the monthly meetings and other LWVCA events!). So, e-mail your thoughts and stories to me at camoble@clermson.edu!***

***Focus the Nation
Reverberates Across the Nation!***

Clemson University had the “PAW-roud” honor of hosting the kick-off event for what has been billed as the largest nationwide teach-in in history: “Focus the Nation, Global Warming Solutions for America.” And, the LWVSC and the LWVCA played an important role in this event.

Just eighteen months ago, noted economist Eban Goodstein of Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon, came up with the idea of Focus the Nation. At one of the early organizational meetings, the zeal of our very own League board member Bea Bailey impressed Dr. Goodstein so much that he decided to hold the kick-off event at Clemson University. The main event was to occur on Jan. 31. Bea, however, made the argument that the presidential primaries were to take place in South Carolina on the 25th (the Republicans decided later to move their primary up by a week), so why not hold a national kick-off in South Carolina the day before. It was an idea that won the day and put Clemson University (and Clemson Area League of Women Voters, a cosponsor) in the national spotlight.

On the day of the event, Democratic presidential contender Barak Obama made an appearance on campus in front of more than 3,000 cheering students and community members. Sen. Obama stated, “This is important. I want everybody to pay attention here. Focus the Nation is going to have the largest campus teach-in, on global warming, in U.S. history [starting] right here on the Clemson Campus. This is an important issue. I want everybody to be involved with it; everybody to be paying attention. I hope all of you choose to participate because that’s a terrific issue...”

On the same day, Dr. Goodstein received a letter of endorsement from Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, stating: “I was excited to

learn that hundreds of colleges, universities, K-12 schools and organizations are participating in Focus the Nation. I want to thank all of the participants, supporters and organizers of Focus the Nation for creating this wonderful opportunity. I also applaud all the young people for getting involved, and I encourage each of you to continue to share what you learn with your friends, families and communities. Keep up the great work!” This was an understatement. In fact, more than 1,600 schools and organizations across the country are participating in Focus the Nation (see <http://www.focusthenation.org> for more information about the national effort).

Clemson set a high bar for the nation. Dozens of faculty participated in the teach-in, involving over a thousand students. There was a wonderful banquet featuring local food (and local flowers!) for 200 people. And in the evening, four Clemson students engaged a panel of political and business leaders about voting for solutions at Choose Your Future. Barbara Zia, chair of the South Carolina League of Women Voters, facilitated the dialogue on the stage.

The Clemson event was amazing and ended with a powerful video message for the Focus the Nation audience from Republican US Congressman Bob Inglis. He thanked Focus the Nation and then made the case for conservatives to engage in this critical conversation. He said the science was compelling and that markets were critical to the solution. The video will be posted soon at the Clemson Focus the Nation website which is: <http://www.clemson.edu/focus/>. We encourage all League members to visit the website to learn more about this important effort!

~Submitted by Steve Johnson

Don't forget to attend the LWVCA General Meeting on Tuesday, February 19 at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. We will discuss growth management, an issue which has special relevance in the Upstate of South Carolina, one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, and an area endowed with many beautiful natural resources. How do we balance growth with our desire to protect these beautiful areas and the quality of life we have come to enjoy?