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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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CLEMSON SC 29633-0802
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Volume 37, Number 2
February 2009

LWVCA President: Beatrice Bailey
The Voter Editor: Catherine Mobley

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
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| Tues. Feb. 10 | LWVCA Board Meeting, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 5:00 p.m. |
| Tues. Feb. 17 | LWVCA General Meeting: Director of Girls' Center to speak at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship. Social time, 7:00 p.m.; Formal Program, 7:30 p.m. |
| Sat. Feb. 21 | LWVCA Book Discussion Group, at the Ulbrich's home, 11:30 a.m., 106 Highland Drive in Clemson (off Pendleton Road) |

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND SAVE THESE DATES:

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| Tues. March 24 | LWVCA Candidate Forum for Clemson City Council, time and location TBA |
| Tues. March 31 | LWVCA General Meeting: "Surviving Budget Cuts in Oconee County Schools," Hamilton Career Center Large Conference Room, 7:00 p.m. |
| Tues. Apr. 21 | LWVCA Annual Meeting, Clemson University Outdoor Lab (Kresge Hall). Guest speaker: Brad Wyche, Upstate Forever. Time to be announced. |

WATCH DEMOCRACY AT WORK

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

President's Message

Dear LWVCA Members and Friends,

Happy New Year and a new year it is! We have now inaugurated the 44th President of the United States and worked with others to create the largest voter turnout in history. Our LWV makes a difference.

Our fun wine-tasting and fundraiser was a huge success. Janie Shipley, Michelle Chin and Elinor Barron brought in record numbers and proceeds. Professor Bruce Ransom, Senior scholar at the Strom Thurmond Institute and political science professor, was on hand to give us his informed political perspective on the Presidential election. We will definitely have to "go to school" on this one. Thanks to all who contributed to this fun and informative fund-raiser!

As you will discover in this February newsletter, this month we have much to look forward to: a program on criminal justice, another meaningful book discussion about a book written by a South Carolina league member, and Legislative Advocacy Day.

Please continue to check our web site for updates and reminders at <http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org>. Eleanor Hare keeps us all up to date.

As always, thanks for all that you do to support the aims of LWVCA.

Cordially, Bea Bailey, LWVCA President



Pictured at the LWVCA November General Meeting on Growth Management, held on November 18 (l. to r.): Ada Lou Steirer, LWVCA; Chip Boyles, former Assistant City Administrator for the City of Clemson and current Executive Director of the International Town and Gown Association; Jim Alexander, Director of Economic Development for Oconee County; and Joe Newton, Appalachian Council of Governments.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: *South Carolina's Future: Our Children:* Legislative Advocacy Day will convene in Columbia on Tuesday, February 24, 2009, at the Columbia Marriott downtown. The day's sessions will concentrate on the conditions of our state's children, the impact of those conditions for our future, new education funding proposals, and advocacy strategies for the new 118th General Assembly. This annual event is co-sponsored by the American Association of University Women of SC, the League of Women Voters SC and the SC School Improvement Council. Members of all three organizations have worked together for the past several years to create an informative day that culminates in a visit by participants to the Statehouse and their local legislators. Come prepared to learn and take that information to those who will be making the statutes affecting our future, and our children.

**Director of Girls' Center
to speak on Tuesday, February 17**

“What works with boys doesn’t necessarily work with girls. It is important that we recognize and honor the distinct developmental pathways and experiences that shape girls’ lives,” says Susan Alford, the director of the newly created Girls Center at Clemson University. The Girls Center was created to act as a resource and center of research where gender-specific issues such as stereotyping, trauma, teen pregnancy, high school dropout rates, and poor self-esteem can be addressed.

Ms. Alford has a long history of advocacy on behalf of girls in the South Carolina Juvenile Justice System (SC DJJ). As the former deputy director for policy and planning, Susan was successful in re-orienting policies and programs within SC DJJ to address the unique needs of girls. As Susan notes in the description of the Girls Center, the Center is creating expertise in the state “to prevent [girls] from becoming dependent, disengaged, involved in the juvenile justice system or stuck in intergenerational cycles of abuse. We inspire girls to embrace and believe in The Power of I.”

Please join us as we listen to Susan Alford at our monthly general meeting on February 17 at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church, 226 Pendleton Road, Clemson. A social hour will be held at 7:00.

~ Submitted by *Robin Kimbrough-Melton*

**Two Reports on the Exit Poll
and Final Precinct Vote Fundraiser**

On Tuesday, November 4, I had the privilege to work for Edison/Mitofosky National Election Pool. Through this fundraiser, we raised \$275 for LWVCA.

On the morning of the election, I arrived at West Union before the polls opened and was there until the final tally was reported. The work entailed handing out confidential questionnaires to those voters who agreed to participate. Specific questions included the voter's background and how they voted for President and U.S. Senate. Additional questions covered topics related to the economy, important issues facing the country, and approval or disapproval about how George W. Bush was handling his Presidency. It was very interesting that the percentages of votes for President and U.S. Senate that I called in at 10 a.m.,

2 p.m. and 6 p.m. were the same as the percentages in the final tally from the voting machine for that precinct - participants seemed to truthfully answer the questions! The questionnaire results were given to ABC, AP, CBS, CNN, FOX News, and NBC News. After the election, results were given to Universities for future detailed study by their political scientists.

This was a great way to earn money for LWVCA and to have a very interesting, but long, day.

~Submitted by *Reggie Turetzky*

Another report about Election Day: Bill and I drove to Woodmont Middle School in Piedmont in Greenville County to call in precinct results to Edison/Mitofsky on Election Day. This group collects precinct reports for ABC, AP, CBS, CNN, Fox News and NBC News. For calling in results from this one precinct, the League received \$50.

Although we showed our letter of introduction, as instructed, the poll manager was somewhat less than receptive to our presence and we were banished to a break room at the school until he was willing for us to see the results. He initially declared that the only way we could see the results was after he posted them on the outside of the door. Fortunately, he relented on that as we would not have been able to read the results easily in the dark.

Advice to future LWV members observing in Greenville County: Find a way to become a certified poll watcher. The poll watcher was not evicted as we were! ~ Submitted by *Eleanor Hare*

**Another LWVCA Event –
Mark Your Calendars!**

Please mark your calendars for Tuesday, March 31 from 7-8pm. Our General Meeting will be held in the Large Conference Room of the Hamilton Career Center. The topic will be "Surviving Budget Cuts in Oconee County Schools." The following individuals have agreed to participate: Dr. Mike Lucas, Superintendent SDOC; Mr. Andy Inabinet, Chairman SDOC School Board, and Mr. Joel Thrift, Vice Chairman Oconee County Council. The event will be moderated by Kathy Woodard, Director of Planning & Research at Clemson University.

~Submitted by *Reggie Turetzky*

LWVCA Begins the New Year at the Program Planning Meeting

A small but vocal group gathered on Saturday, January 24th to make program recommendations for the local and state League. We agreed to continue our local education position and are drafting a new position on growth management for the annual meeting. We recommended two new studies to the state, hoping that at least one will be approved. They are:

1. *Proposed new study under education/state and local government: Structure and authority of school districts.*

Although school districts, like cities and counties, are governed by elected boards, the citizens have no say in the size and method of election, and the legislature generally has the power to consolidate or split districts. School districts also have very unequal amounts of fiscal autonomy in terms of approving their budgets and setting their mill rates. The governance of school districts is the last vestige of our late and unlamented form of local government by county delegation. Who should have the power to consolidate or split districts? Who decides how many members a school board should have, and whether they are elected at large, from single-member districts, or some of each? This issue is one that goes to the heart of the League's purpose, which is citizen participation in and ownership of government. We propose a two year study of what is in place in terms of school district governance and what we would like to have, with each League exploring the problem from its own local perspective as well as a statewide viewpoint.

2. *Proposed revisiting of the water and land use position under natural resources.* We would like to expand position #11 under natural resources, which currently reads as follows:

11. Promoting land use and water resource policies that manage land and water as finite resources and that incorporate principles of stewardship and other land use planning strategies at both the state and local level.

We would like to add a study of water issues in general, but particularly interstate (NC and GA) water conflicts affecting the quality and quantity of water in South Carolina. Interbasin transfers in North Carolina have affected water quality and flow along the SC coast. Georgia is looking at Lake Hartwell as a potential water resource, and on the lower Savannah, pollutants from the Georgia side have brought economic development to a halt. The drought has partly receded, but the threat remains. The state has exceptionally high per capita water use, most of it related to power generation. We think these are issues of great and immediate concern to the entire state.

We also agreed with the recommendation to do a concurrence study of regulation of payday lending.

We recommend the following action priorities for the state:

1. Education: education finance
2. Election reform: voter access and apportionment
3. Taxation: comprehensive tax reform
4. Natural resources: alternative energy

These recommendations will be sent to state board along with recommendations from other Leagues in South Carolina. The summary of these recommendations will result in recommended 2009-11 program and action priorities for the League to be voted on at the state convention in Greenville.

~ Submitted by *Holley Ulbrich*



Steve Johnson, Alice Flowers, and Perryn Freeman enjoying themselves at the annual LWVCA Holiday Party.

**Please Join us for the
LWVCA Book Discussion Group**

This year, the LWVCA hopes to host two book discussion groups. As announced in the November newsletter, our spring selection is Harriet Keyserling’s *Against the Tide*. Harriet was a long-time active LWV member in South Carolina and served eight years in the South Carolina House when women legislators were a rarity. Her book provides a great inside account of the doings of the General Assembly

Please join us on Saturday, February 21st at 11:30 a.m. at the home of Holley Ulbrich, 108 Highland Drive in Clemson (off Pendleton Road). Holley will provide soup and beverages. You can bring something to share with others (dessert, bread, etc.) or to eat with your soup. ~ *Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

**Become an Advocate!
Learn how to Track Legislation**

Have you often wondered how to figure out just what is happening at the State house? Do you find yourself ever pondering whether a certain bill will ever become law? If so, we can help! Several of our members are prepared to teach you how to track state legislation via the Internet. This is an excellent way to stay informed and to witness “democracy in action.”

In early January, a small group of members met at Jittery Joe’s to learn more about how to keep tabs on what’s happening in Columbia. If you would like to learn how, make an appointment with Holley Ulbrich or Eleanor Hare. Eleanor has a nice clear set of written instructions to follow. It’s easy! It’s fun! You get lots of email about the bills that you are following!

~ *Submitted by Holley Ulbrich
and Catherine Mobley*

**Mark Your Calendars for the
City of Clemson Candidate Forum**

The LWVCA has scheduled a Candidate Forum for Clemson City Council for Tuesday, March 24. All three candidates (Jeremy T. Wright, Christel L. Medeiros, Roy "Steven" Fields) have agreed to participate. We are currently collecting questions for the candidates. Questions can be sent to LWVClemson@gmail.com.

**Mark your Calendars
for the LWVCA Annual Meeting!**

On Tuesday, November 18, the LWVCA sponsored a forum on growth management in the Upstate. At that meeting, the presenters and audience members raised a number of important issues and questions about how to preserve the quality of life in the Upstate, while also strengthening the economy.

On Tuesday, April 21, we will have an opportunity to learn more about this important issue. On that date, the LWVCA will hold its annual meeting at the Clemson University Outdoor Lab. Be sure to join us as we listen to Brad Wyche, Executive Director of Upstate Forever, an upstate organization that “promotes sensible growth and protects special places in the Upstate region of South Carolina.” If you don’t know about Upstate Forever, now is the time to learn more! And, if you are already familiar with Upstate Forever, join us to learn more about the organization’s most recent efforts and to see (through Brad’s slide show) evidence of their successes in the Upstate.

~ *Submitted by Eleanor Hare
and Catherine Mobley*

**LWVCA Post-Election Celebration
and Wine Tasting a Great Success!**

On Thursday, November 13, the LWVCA hosted a wine-tasting and post-election celebration at the Village Walk clubhouse. Clemson University Professor Bruce Ransom, Chair of Policy Studies at Strom Thurmond Institute offered his comments on Presidential election. His election follow-up was terrific!

Thanks to Allowee Merck of Carolina Real Estate who sponsored our use of the facility and the great help from Ken Hembree of Old Town Spirits in Pendleton who went above and beyond the call of duty to help us out. Your committee: Michelle Chin, Janie Shipley, and Elinor Baron.

~*Submitted by Elinor Baron*

Statement to the Legislative Delegation: On January 19, Holley Ulbrich read the following statement to the Pickens County Legislative Delegation. The event was held at the West End Community Center in Easley. Such interactions and discussions are an important part of “making democracy work” in the Upstate and elsewhere. We encourage you to attend the next legislative delegation. Stay tuned for announcements about these special events!

I am Holley Ulbrich, a member of the board of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area. The League is a membership organization working to encourage informed citizen participation in government. We welcome the opportunity to share some of the League’s concerns at the start of a new legislative session.

There have been many calls for comprehensive tax reform and for an independent tax commission. During the current economic downturn, the League feels that now more than ever we need to rethink our revenue system so as to make it more stable and to distribute the burden more fairly. Stability is especially important in order to ensure funding for important public services, including not only K-12 education but also higher education, juvenile justice, and other important programs that have suffered during this very difficult year. A crisis is also an opportunity, to reconsider how we do the public business in South Carolina, and to prepare for the next economic downturn so that we will be better able to maintain services.

We also urge you to reconsider the way we fund public education in South Carolina. Act 388 has resulted in an increased state share of education funding, but the additional state aid in the form of homeowner property tax relief is distributed among districts without much regard to need or local ability to raise funds. Districts with more high-valued homes or a larger share of the tax base in owner-occupied property receive a larger share of these funds. Growth in funding has been divorced from growth in the property tax base. We ask you to look more closely at that distribution of state aid and take steps to ensure that all of our state’s children have access to a quality 21st century education.

The League has a long history of concern about protecting the natural environment in our beautiful state, and protecting the health and safety of our people from environmental risks. We are concerned about the proposed Santee Cooper coal plant to be built south of Pamplico on the Great Pee Dee River. This plant will emit a substantial amount of mercury. Mercury is a dangerous neurotoxin linked to human illnesses like birth defects, nerve disorders and heart failure. Mercury becomes toxic methyl mercury in our rivers. One pound of mercury is enough to contaminate 500,000 fish. People and particularly children who eat contaminated fish are at risk. According to a recent article in the Post and Courier newspaper, between Conway and Florence, there are mercury “hot spots” that form a “Mercury Triangle” of contaminated fish around the proposed coal plant. According to DHEC, all three rivers near the proposed site, the Little Pee Dee, the Lynches and the Great Pee Dee, are contaminated with mercury. Santee Cooper currently is responsible for over one third of the state’s mercury pollution as represented by its top 25 polluters. This proposed coal plant will not only pollute our air and water with mercury; it will emit 7500 tons of soot-forming SO² and 900 tons of particulate matter. These emissions will negatively impact children suffering from asthma and adults with heart and lung ailments and lead to numerous premature deaths.

As the legislative session progresses, we will continue to monitor proposed legislation and communicate with you about our concerns. Thank you for your service to our state.