



THE VOTER

February 2016 Vol. 43 No. 1

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Message from the President

Several weeks ago, LWVUS invited us to join them during the State of the Union address while they live-tweeted the event. I decided that would be a good excuse for me to dust off my Twitter account and see what all the Twitter fuss is about. Mind you, I'm not exactly new to Twitter. Looking at my "profile," I see that I opened an account in 2009. At that time, I chose to follow the CDC, as there was, no doubt, some global health crisis unfolding. That is 6 years that I have been an account holder and member of the Twitterverse. Never mind that I have never installed the app on my phone, never tweeted anything nor spent time reading a tweet. Six years. Nada. (Clearly, I chose to follow health crises through other media).



I chose to add a few new names to my "follow" list, to begin my Twitter experience. They include LWVUS (@LWV), so I could participate in this live tweeting event, and two other League resources, Barbara Zia (@BarbaraZia1), member of LWVUS Board from Charleston, and Lynn Teague (@LynnSTeague), LWVSC VP. Lynn has already helped to keep me abreast of some ethics reform goings-on in Columbia, a topic about which I am deeply concerned. I also follow a family business, KU basketball, and still, the CDC. If you are game to give it a try, I encourage you to follow all of these League resources.

Why do I do this? Part of it is to be aware of current technologies (even though I'm a few years behind). But there are other reasons, like being aware of *trending* topics, getting emergency alerts, reading live coverage of events I can't attend (like the State of the Union address) plus it's an efficient way to consume information. The 140 character limit forces posts to be focused and convey a point succinctly. The League attracts a very diverse population with lots of interests, and it is incumbent upon the League to appeal to those for whom social media is second nature. I don't expect that I will ever be devoted to any of the social media platforms, but I am willing to make an effort, at least with Twitter. And maybe someday, I will even jump in and tweet something really profound!

Happy tweeting!

Janie

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voters Clemson Area
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www.lwvclemsonarea.org

OFFICERS:

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Holley Ulbrich, VP/Program & Action
Diana Stafford, Secretary
Bill Hare, Treasurer

ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Ellen Magee
Cheryl Lee
Nicole Paluzzi
Patty Warner
Lyn Norton
Sandra Gray

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Paula Appling, *Voter* Editor, Mem. Co-Chair
Elaine Laiewski, Publicity Chair
Janet Marsh, Membership Co-Chair
Rosellen Aleguire, Nominating Comm Chair

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tues, Feb 2 **BOARD MEETING**, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, Clemson, 5:30 pm
 Tues, Feb 16 **FEBRUARY GENERAL MEETING**: Criminal Justice, OLLI, 7:15
 Sat, Mar 12 **Wine Tasting Event**, details to be announced
 Tues, May 10 **ANNUAL MEETING**, Occasions, Central, SC

Refer to lwvclemsonarea.org for updates and current information

Nominating Committee

Our LWV chapter is a dynamic group of people in the Upstate who are making an impact in the lives of our citizens by getting our voices heard in the political halls of Columbia. The nominating committee is looking for interesting and interested people who would like rewarding experiences. We have three Office positions and three Board of Director positions coming available this year. Come join us.

You will have opportunities to:

- build your leadership skills,
- learn to use your skills to make things happen for the League and for your community,
- help to set the direction for the LWVCA
- expand your commitment to the League.

Contact Rosellen Aleguire, Nominating Committee Chair, at r aleguire7@att.net

Just Mercy: A Book Review and a Call to February's Meeting

Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson (2015) is an account of the experiences of a Harvard-educated African-American lawyer dealing with death row cases in Georgia and Atlanta from the late 1980s into the 21st century. Stevenson did an internship with the Southern Prisoners Defense Committee during school and returned to the Committee to work on death row cases, after getting his law degree and passing the bar. One case, Walter McMillian, provides the central theme of the story, a man who was guilty of being prosperous and independent and having an affair with a white waitress, but not of a murder he could not possibly have committed. There are many other cases as well, most of them African-American and most of them involving gross miscarriages of justice. Walter McMillian was eventually exonerated, but some of the others were not so fortunate. This is a gripping, eye-opening true story of Southern justice and injustice decades after the Civil Rights Act.

This book, its author, and a You-tube video by the author, are the focus of our February 16th meeting as we revisit the League's position on criminal justice. I urge you to read the book, but the video should be enough to offer a basis for a discussion of the issue. We will also explore what we might be able to do to help, both as individuals and as a League, to reduce the number of people imprisoned and help them put their lives back together when they are released.

The Equal Justice Initiative for which the author worked is located in Montgomery, Alabama. You can visit the web site at www.eji.org.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

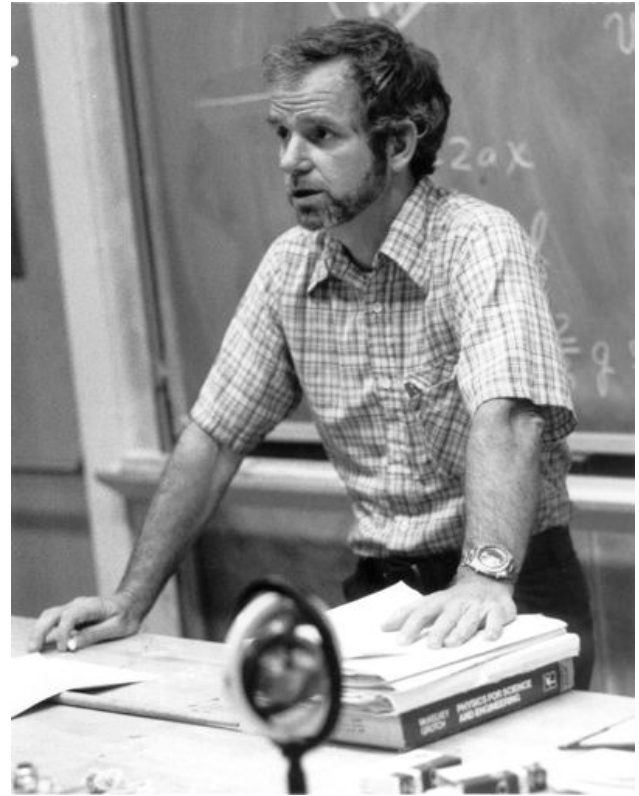


January Board Meeting: THE Place to be! Clockwise from bottom left: Heidi Williams, Rosellen Aleguire, Patty Warner, Janie Shipley, Sandra Gray, Diana Stafford, Lyn Norton, Matt Saltzman, Cheryl Lee, Bill Hare, Eleanor Hare, Janet Marsh, Paula Appling, and Holley Ulbrich. The empty chair was filled by the picture taker, Nicole Paluzzi.

January in Review: Forgotten South Carolina

January's General Meeting presentation was made by Lyn Norton who served on the State Board of Education for 4 years. She spoke a little about the "Corridor of Shame" documentary, which highlighted inequities in public schools in the I 95 Corridor. An additional area in the "Forgotten South Carolina" is the "Mill Crescent, a swath of rural, largely white old textile mill counties located between the I 85 economic power house and greater Columbia." According to the News & Courier "If you took this other South Carolina away, the state would no longer rank at the bottom of nearly every list you want it to be at the top of. It would basically mirror the nation as a whole in income, education and health." (www.postandcourier.com/article/2013-02-10/PC16/130219990/1283/disparities-divide-south-carolina-into-2-worlds) Learn more about this long-standing issue in a comprehensive series in the News & Courier, February 2013, by accessing this link. (Photos on page 5.)

Submitted by Paula Appling



CARL ULBRICH

1932-2015

Loved science, family, and nature

Student Voter Registration Success!



In addition to the spring voter registration drive, 635 students were registered to vote in the PPP (Preferential Presidential Primary), which will be held February 20, (Republican Primary) or February 27 (Democratic Primary). Many of these students are still only 17 years old but will be 18 on or before November 8.

Starting in November 2015, all Oconee and Pickens County schools were contacted by LWV members before the deadline, January 20th of 2016. In addition, Clemson University, three campuses at Tri-County-Technical College, and Southern Wesleyan University were contacted. Anderson County Schools Pendleton and TL Hannah High were contacted but had already been served.

Seventeen volunteers participated in this important function of our League. Many of these dedicated volunteers went to three different campuses. They came away with interesting

insights and new ideas of ways to increase our voter services. Our next challenge is to set up follow-up services to these schools. The LWVCA is open to innovative ideas for this project."

Submitted by Cheryl Lee

Welcome New Members!

Shelley Freeman

Shelley says: I have been a speech-language pathologist forever, even through the birth of three babies within three years, two breast cancer experiences and a second graduate degree. Although my husband has retired and stayed retired, I tried for one year, 2004-2005, and then went back to work part-time wherever we lived, north central FL, NC near both ends of the state, Asheville and the Inner Banks, and now in Seneca, SC. Currently I work in Toccoa, GA, for a company that transformed a bank into a clinic for pediatric therapies: OT, PT and me. My career has been a passion. So have dogs, whom I showed in the 80's and 90's. Now we have four, a grand champion in AKC and three rescues. We travel to Italy some and have ridden the Santa Fe Trail on a tandem bike (1,100 miles in 17 days, where I soon discovered Bag Balm). I enjoy cooking, my two book clubs, Newcomer activities and the Clemson UU Church. I was very active in AAUW, and always wanted to join the League. At last I'm here, and I hope to help get out the vote for the upcoming election.

Elizabeth Vogt

Says Elizabeth: I lived in Atlanta for almost twenty years before coming to Clemson. There I both worked as a volunteer for the Democratic Party of Georgia and for U.S. Congressman Wyche Fowler from 1985 to 1987 as a Staff Assistant. In 2009, I returned to Clemson to work on a Masters Degree in history, with which I graduated in 2011. I work as a history instructor for Tri-County Technical College and Anderson University. I also am a Spanish interpreter for South Carolina Court Administration on an on-call basis. I have also been active in various issues that have come before Clemson City Council in the past few years. I believe that voter and civic education is important for the development of our community as a whole.

Brad Meyer

Brad [Elizabeth Vogt's spouse] is originally from Tempe Arizona, attended Rice University for his undergraduate degree and the University of Chicago for his Ph.D. in nuclear astrophysics. He is a full professor of physics and astronomy at Clemson, joining the faculty in 1990.

Submitted by Elizabeth Vogt

Holiday Party - A Showcase of Southern Hospitality!

Our hostess, Cheryl Lee, and her beautiful home were the foundation of an evening of good food, fine adult beverages and great conversations. And it all happened against a background of live harp music performed by Cynthia Warner and Martha Lee.

Forty people attended this annual event, seven of whom were visitors. Two joined as members during the evening! It was not all just for fun though; we collected a number of big baskets of non-perishables (totaling 62.18 lbs!) for Clemson Community Care.

Submitted by Paula Appling

FACEBOOK!

The League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area is ramping up its Facebook presence! If you haven't already, please find us and "**LIKE**" us so you can receive up-to-date information about political happenings, as well as information and reports from League events. Most of all, we hope to grow awareness of our involvement and activities via social media, hopefully reaching new and broader audiences. Find us by searching League of Women Voters - Clemson Area.

Submitted by Heidi Williams

Save the Dates!

Tuesday, May 10 – The Annual Meeting in 2016 will be held at Occasions in Central. This is a new venue that is easy to get to and quite lovely. A special program is being planned as well as an exciting menu. Details to come.

Saturday, March 12 – Annual Wine Tasting Fundraiser event, *An Evening in Venice*. This year will feature the robust flavor profile from the Veneto Region of Italy in a flight of wines curated by Level II Certified International Sommelier Eva Hirschmann Frye of Table 301 Restaurant Group in Greenville. Ms. Frye has designed a wine flight that will pair wine with charcuterie to best complement the character of both and will share notes on each label and vintage. This year we will focus on the social enjoyment of wine and to learn the viniculture and viticulture that produces them. Watch for details.

One Woman's Opinion: Why We Need a Solar Bill of Rights To Promote New Jobs

Solar generation and distribution is going to be a great job creator in 2016 and hereafter.

Thanks to the *Distributed Energy Resource Program Act* (DERPA) that was signed into law on June 2, 2014, SC is now the 44th state to secure legislation to help produce more solar energy.

DERPA allows utilities to establish distributed energy resources programs, authorizes third-party solar leasing, and updates the state's Net Metering program. Net Metering allows customers to get credit on their utility bills for energy they generate through solar installations that send their power back to the grid for everyone to use. Electric meters that facilitate that transference are produced right here in West Union, South Carolina by Itron, Inc. This legislation passed unanimously.

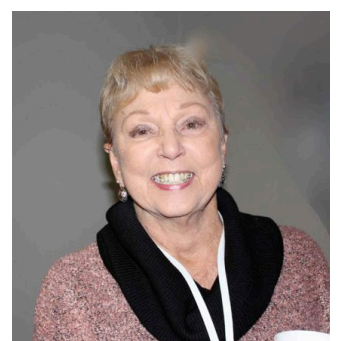
Solar energy production is great for economic development and job creation. We are behind North Carolina at 4th and Georgia at 16th in jobs created, but we will catch up quickly. These jobs will come for trainers, installers, inspectors, salespeople, electricians, administrators, advertisers, leasing companies, and financing. I did some research and there are more than 59 companies already involved with solar energy, and I only scratched the surface. This is a win-win situation for our State.

Before Net Metering was passed, SC provided 700 solar jobs in installation, manufacturing, sales and distribution in 2014. Since the passage of Net Metering in North Carolina jobs exploded, providing 5,600 solar jobs in 2014. According to The Solar Foundation, the solar industry employed over 173,807 solar workers, representing a growth rate of 21.8% over 2013. I feel that 2016 will far exceed that percentage, because as people learn that it is available, they will want it.

There is, however, a major roadblock for many of these potential customers in South Carolina. That is the Property Owners' Associations (also known as Homeowner Owners' Associations or HOAs). Many prevent the rooftop installation of solar. We need legislation this year that would prevent these groups from restricting solar power installation within their regulations, covenants, or by-laws that keep many homeowners from installing a solar energy device. We need a *Solar Rights Act* like those in 34 other states (such as North Carolina's General Statutes Chapter 22B Article 3, Deed Restrictions, Covenants, and Other Agreements Prohibiting Solar collectors).

In a recent South Carolina poll, 73% of respondents across political party lines said they want to see more solar growth. A strong majority of South Carolinians, (more than 75%) agree that rooftop solar is an important part of providing choice and competition in electric generation. Arbitrary rules for neighborhoods and cities should not block progress toward clean, energy independence for our State. These arbitrary rules should not prevent these wonderful jobs from being created in our state. Being part of the Sunbelt, we are blessed with a great deal of sunshine that can be turned into a wonderful benefit for all.

Submitted by Patty Warner



At the January General meeting: (l to r) Janie Shipley presided, Cheryl Lee drummed up volunteers for voter registration services, Holley Ulbrich spoke about Program Planning on Saturday and the main speaker, Lyn Norton. See meeting review on page 3.

Does Your Presidential Preferential Primary Vote Matter?

Check out this viewpoint from author Mark Schmitt, director of the political reform program at New America, a think-tank in Washington. In his article *Trump Did Not Break Politics*¹, he begins with “Politics, we’re often told, is governed by rules — basic principles that explain not just what’s going to happen, but what rational candidates and parties can be expected to do. ... Take this familiar rule: “Americans hate Congress, but love their own member of Congress.”

Why? Mr. Schmitt suggests through the use of “Transactional politics.” Remember legislators being famous for constituent services? Remember congressional leaders handing out earmarks to congressional districts in exchange for cooperation of the legislator?

Even though Gallup polls since 2013 suggest “near majorities” of voters viewed their representatives as responding more to special interests than constituents, “96% of House incumbents won re-election in 2014 and the Republican majority, despite its own 71% disapproval rating on Election Day -- expanded.”

According to Mr. Schmitt, such election results lead politicians to believe they can actually ignore “transactional politics” without regard to elections.

“Governors, too, rejected everything from infrastructure spending to federal funding for Medicaid expansion. Even when they saw their approval ratings drop into the 30s, they survived.”

“Underlying the old rule was a bigger one: the ‘median voter theorem’ — the idea that the views of the typical, middle-of-the-road voter, as expressed through elections, drove parties and politicians. These are the ‘Reagan Democrats’ and ‘soccer moms’ of recent decades.” It’s not much of a theory at all anymore. Well-organized interest groups like the National Rifle Association and the National Education Association as well as large donors and ideological warriors on both sides have more clout than the median voter because they are organized and focused while most people aren’t.

“And in many nonpresidential elections, the median voter probably isn’t voting at all. That’s particularly true for low-income people: Election participation by people in households just below the median income of \$52,000 was around 40 percent in 2014, compared with 52 percent for voters in households earning \$150,000 or more.”...

So, do you think your vote matters? I’d say it does more than ever, but you may need to be part of a group of active, informed citizens at the local, state and national levels to make a big difference. I’m casting my vote in the First-In-The South primary. I hope you will and remind others, too.

Submitted by Charlotte Holmes

¹ JAN. 4, 2016 www.nytimes.com/2016/01/04/opinion/campaign-stops/trump-did-not-break-politics.html?emc=edit_th_20160104&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=66518694&r=0

LWVCA Represents! Pickens County Legislative Delegation Meeting Reviewed

At the recent Pickens County Legislative Delegation Meeting, Representatives Gary Clary and Davy Hiott, and Senators Larry Martin and Thomas Alexander listened to 20 citizens and representatives of 3 organizations voice their concerns and air their grievances. Two of the three organizations represented were LWV-Clemson Area represented by Janie Shipley and the LWVSC Task Force on Alternative Voting Technologies represented by Eleanor Hare. Eight League members delivered statements (in addition to several other like minded individuals). One topic that everyone agreed on was the desire for NO COAL ASH in Pickens County. Speakers were split on whether a seventh School Board Representative should be added to the School Board of Pickens County and two individuals spoke on their desire for age appropriate and medically accurate sex education to be taught in the schools. The next meeting (in January 2017) will be held in Pickens.

Submitted by Paula Appling

Observer Corps Reports**Pickens Board of Registration and Elections – December 1, 2015**

During the public comment period Sarah McNeill shared that the LWV was still concerned about the budget issues and their effect on smooth election procedures. The budget issues have not changed. Budget requests for next year were distributed and tabled until the January 5th meeting.

Training for poll workers is scheduled. The way poll workers are paid was discussed. The county has apparently decided to pay through accounts payable rather than payroll, the method prescribed by state and federal law. Herb Thompson will speak personally with Council members about these continuing issues.

Submitted by Sarah McNeill, Frances Plotnik, Aleta Robinson

Anderson County Legislative Delegation Meeting – December 4, 2015

Citizens were appointed to local boards and commissions including five district water boards. A request for funding from Upstate Forever was denied. LWVCA President Janie Shipley spoke to the Delegation about League priorities. Eleanor Hare spoke about the League's priorities in the selection of new voting machines.

Submitted by Janie Shipley and Eleanor Hare

Pickens County Council – Dec. 7, 2015

Mr. Alan Robinson from Cherry Bekaert CPA presented the annual financial report. He stated that the financial condition of the County is good and that all best practices are being followed. He stated that Mr. Guarino and his staff have, for the tenth year in a row, been the recipient of the award for excellence in financial accounting.

Mr. Smith asked if Mr. Guarino or his staff had any knowledge of coal ash coming into the county.

Sarah McNeill spoke about funding for the Elections office. She stated that Pickens County is paying their poll workers using Accounts Receivable while other counties are using payroll and asked for an explanation. Chairperson Willis replied that poll workers are under the threshold required for payroll.

Submitted by Sarah McNeill and Eleanor Hare

Pickens County Council – January 4, 2016

An unusually large crowd attended in response to media reports that a landfill on Old Liberty Road was going to be expanded to receive out-of-state coal ash. Council is exploring its options. League members Sarah McNeill, Patty Warner, Dan Warner, Bill Hare and Eleanor Hare attended.

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Pickens Board of Registration & Elections – January 5, 2016

The Director reported that the budget crisis was over as the Administrator credited the budget \$5,402.88 for city election work. This had not happened before.

The office is on track with elections preparation. All counties will open absentee balloting by January 20th for Republican and 27th for Democrat. The office is required to be open Saturday February 13th absentee voting from 9-1. The Republican Presidential Primary is February 20th, the Democratic primary is February 27th.

The budget for 2016 was approved unanimously. It was essentially the same as last year. The county will continue to pay election workers from accounts payable as their pay is under \$600 per year.

Submitted by Sarah McNeill

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

Email address _____

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.

Visit our website at www.lwvclemsonarea.org and contact us at lwvclemson@gmail.com.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

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