



THE VOTER

February 2018 Vol. 45 No. 2

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area
Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee and Anderson Counties

Message from the Co-President

The League of Women Voters is still relevant. This national organization is 98 years old this year, and the question of its relevancy has been a topic of consideration by the national Board. They have given much attention to the history of the League and how the organization may look different in its second hundred years. Similarly, on January 30, the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area (LWVCA) took a look back as we celebrated our 50th birthday. Presentations by charter and early members reflected on the early days of LWVCA. There were many differences: women were more often stay-at-home moms; they were identified by their husband's name rather than their own; membership in the League of Women Voters was for women only; community notices were posted at the local drugstore instead of on Facebook.



But there are more similarities than differences. Like many of our early members, many of our current members come to LWVCA having had positive experiences with Leagues in other places and they seek the camaraderie, stimulation and purpose that they expect from LWV membership. We often undertake studies on which our local, state and national positions are based, though we were told not as many studies as in the past. We continue to dedicate ourselves to a strong democracy which values and promotes an active and informed electorate.

When we think about what was going on in 1968, we remember a period of confusion and unrest. North Korea had captured a US surveillance ship, the USS Pueblo. The civil rights movement and the Vietnam war were front and center on evening television reports. Against this backdrop, these 43 women who gathered in Clemson, SC in January 1968 displayed great strength and vision as they established the LWVCA. We pay tribute to them and especially to our charter members, Berniece Holt, Holley Ulbrich, Eleanor Hare, Ellen Reneke, and Ada Lou Steirer as we welcome over 100 members for the first time in our history, and as we join Leagues across the country to register voters and conduct candidate forums, to embark on campaigns to fight gerrymandering, to promote access to health care, and to promote public education and a clean environment. With sincere appreciation to them, we say on to the next 50 years for the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area!

Janie Shipley

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League of Women Voters Clemson Area
Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson Counties
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633
www.lwvclemsonarea.org

OFFICERS:

Eleanor Hare, Co-President
Janie Shipley, Co-President
Ann Russell, Secretary
Bill Hare, Treasurer

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Catherine Farris
Cheryl Lee
Janet Marsh
Fran Rundlett
Elizabeth Vogt
Patty Warner

APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Cece Parker, Advocacy Coordinator
Linda Gahan Co-Program and Action
Diana Stafford, VOTER Editor

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

Reggie Turetzky
Elizabeth Adams
Christine Prado

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, Feb. 20 - General Meeting - Climate Change in South Carolina 7:15 p.m.
OLLI Building

Saturday, Mar. 17, - Wine Tasting, - Mill Creek Lodge, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, Mar. 27, - General Meeting - Health Care Update 7:15 p.m. OLLI Building

Tuesday, Apr. 17 - General Meeting - Growth Management 7:15 p.m. OLLI Building

Saturday, Apr. 28 - State Council Meeting - Columbia

Tuesday, May 8, - Annual Meeting - Occasions at Wedgefield, 6:00 p.m.

June 12 - Primary Elections in SC

June 28,- LWV National Convention

OLLI Building, - 578 Issaqueenq Trail, 100 Thomas Green Blvd, Clemson (864-633-5242)
Mill Creek Lodge ,- 541 Pike Rd. Central
Occasions at Wedgefield, - 1551 Mile Creek Rd.- Central

A special Thank You to the Village Pastry Shop in Pendleton for their donation of delicious sandwiches for the 50th Anniversary Party.

SAVE THE DATE!!! The **Annual Wine Tasting** is scheduled for March 17, 2018 at Mill Creek Lodge. This is the same beautiful location as last year, on the lake, and we look forward to even more of our members attending. If you were not there, the Lodge offers a lovely deck so we can be outside as well as a terrific indoor space. We get the best of both worlds, so please join us! We'll have 7-8 wine selections and are working to determine the theme and possibilities to go along with our St. Patrick's Day date!

We are seeking volunteers for the food OR decorating committees, so please email Catherine Watt at Catherine.watt67@gmail.com or call her at 903-3266. There will be more information to follow as the magical date approaches. Check the website for more information www.clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org

LWVCA Celebrates 50 Years

On Tuesday, January 30 of 2018, the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area celebrated its fiftieth birthday at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute in Central, South Carolina. In addition to over 40 guests, present were four charter members: Holley Ulbrich, Ada Lou Steirer, Eleanor Hare, and Ellen Reneke. Berniece Holt was also honored as a charter member, but was unable to attend. Each charter member was asked to reflect on the past 50 years of their experience with the LWVCA and was gifted roses to express the League's gratitude to them. The organizers of the event chose a "starry" theme for the evening, and the charter members were honored as "supernovas" who have brought an intense light into the League and into our communities. Also present was Mayor J. C. Cook of Clemson, who offered a proclamation decreeing the 30th of January, 2018 as League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area Appreciation Day. The evening was filled with sharing memories, reflecting on the past 50 years, and looking ahead to the next 50.

submitted by Ashley Levesque



Proclamation

WHEREAS, January 30th, 2018 marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area, and

WHEREAS, the League of Women Voters is committed to encouraging informed citizen participation in government, and

WHEREAS, the League's good efforts in registering voters, providing election information, educating on issues, and encouraging voters to exercise their franchise in our city and county have resulted in a more informed and active electorate, and

WHEREAS, League members support informative meetings on public issues and help members and others to convey their concerns and opinions to elected officials at all levels, resulting in better decisions and more mutual understanding,

I THEREFORE proclaim, by the authority vested in me as Mayor of the City of Clemson, that January 30th, 2018 shall be declared League of Women Voters Appreciation Day throughout the city of Clemson.

J. C. Cook, Mayor

February General Meeting

Our speaker will be Dan Warner. His talk will start with a short overview of the science of global warming. Believe it or not, the science has been known for over a century. Moreover, just as a few degrees change in your body temperature can kill you, a few degrees increase in the average temperature across the planet will change the Earth's climate. Some of the early changes in Earth's climate are reflected in extreme weather events, some of which have been quite evident in South Carolina.

Mitigating Climate Change requires a complete conversion to renewable energy. Thanks to the \$9,000,000,000 collapse of the V.C. Sumpter Nuclear Power plant, renewable energy is center stage in this year's state legislative drama. He will bring us up to date on the details and status of those bills, which were highlighted in the latest LWV SC Voter newsletter, that reflect a dramatic move toward clean and inexpensive renewable energy.

LEAD Day

LEAD was a big success! Several members of the Clemson League plus co-presidents Eleanor Hare and Janie Shipley attended. Holly Ulbrich, founder of the Clemson League, presided as co-president of the statewide League

The keynote speaker was Laura Hart. She gave an excellent presentation detailing the status and evolution of the *Abbeville vs the State of SC* saga, a lawsuit about the LWV and others' fight for educational equity in SC. (Equity in public education is one of the League's most important issues, and the League signed an amicus briefing in the case.) Laura Hart was one of the lead attorneys in the case. She did her work mostly pro bono and specializes in schools in her work. The Clemson and state Leagues' Holly Ulbrich, a retired professor of economics from Clemson, was an expert witness in the case.

The state constitution of 1895 mandated a free public education for SC children. The *Brown vs the Board of Education* ruling by the Supreme Court in 1954 decreed that all children had the right to be educated, the right to transportation, and that the state shall provide maintenance and support to be minimally adequate. But SC still lacked basic maintenance and support. Several times the Supreme Court denied petitions by the state of South Carolina claiming that black and minority children's performance was a product of poverty, that the Court had no role in oversight of state education, and besides that, the state had no money. There is still the 1954 ruling that says the state SHALL provide an adequate education, regardless of the cost etc. That's where it stands now.

Matt Saltzman, a Clemson Math professor, gave us an update on the state's redistricting or gerrymandering by one party or another. The drawing of voting districts is up for renewal in 2020 and the League is very concerned about these principles: one person one vote, that the districts should not break up political boundaries, that the district must be contiguous and compact and that the districting must not favor one party or another. To challenge gerrymandering, plaintiffs must also show intent. But what are the standards? What about the coasts? What about shape versus other considerations? What is the effect? Prof. Saltzman is working to come up with a mathematical model to address these concerns. There is a group from Tufts University near Boston that is conducting research on these issues, and Prof. Saltzman hopes to apply these techniques in South Carolina. In addition to the above concerns, the census of 2020 will be underfunded.

After lunch, we heard about how to use the new Vote411 system. Local Leagues are encouraged to get information about what the candidate stands for, send emails to candidates, call back non-responders, and to publish the guide. This process takes the place of past voter guides. The state League sees this as key because of gerrymandering and voter apathy for candidates lower on the ballot. The state League will give \$100 to each League throughout the state to help implement the Vote411 system. Members are asked to help formulate specific questions for candidates. It is national League policy not to edit candidates' responses to questions, even regarding punctuation.

Lynn Teague, the LWV lobbyist at the state level, reviewed the case of SCANA. She said there is a conflict within the law with which the PERC, the state board in charge of regulating utilities, must comply. The regulation says on the one hand the mission of the public service commission, under PERC, must protect ratepayers and at the same time protect the officers of utilities. The state League is working on a complex of bills. Our attorney says we cannot change the law, but we can clarify it. Re: the merger of SCANA with Dominion, there is the risk of another mistake. Re: redistricting, Ms. Teague said the atmosphere in the Legislature is poor, and the local leagues must continue to educate the public on the issue. She said it is only a myth that the issue is hopeless.

submitted by Fran Rundlett

Planning Meeting

A dozen members of LWVCA gathered at our annual lunch program planning meeting at Ye Olde Sandwiche Shoppe in Seneca on February 3rd. A lively discussion resulted in several recommendations to LWVUS, They include an endorsement of a new study of artificial intelligence, proposed by a California League and ably supported by LWVCA members Mike Ellison and Matt Saltzman. Whether or not that is approved by the national convention, we will be hearing more about it next year at the local level.

We also affirmed the continuing emphasis at the national level on making democracy work with an added focus on the primary system and the electoral college. We were pleased to report to national the many national positions on which we had advocated ranging from redistricting to immigration to health care and entitlements.

Each year we also review our local positions, which focus on education and growth management, to give some guidance to the Board on any proposed revisions. That conversation provided some background education to the three relatively new members present on our position on the composition of the Pickens County School Board. Proposed rewording of the position on the school board led to further conversation on a possible study of the makeup of the Pickens (and Oconee) County Council may or may not result from that conversation. Stay tuned!

This annual event is always lightly attended but leads to some pretty intense, enlightening, and spirited conversation. If you missed it, be sure to plan to be there next year.

submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Pictures from LEAD Day



November General Meeting

During our November meeting, we had an inspiring presentation from Dr. Ken Robinson, Associate Professor of Sociology at Clemson University, and students enrolled in The Community course. Dr. Robinson, a member of the LWVCA for nearly a decade, is known for teaching service-learning classes that provide students with hands-on, real-world experience in community-based problem solving. And this course was no exception, as we learned at our monthly meeting during which Dr. Robinson and his students informed us about the South Carolina (SC) Promise Zone.

The Lowcountry South Carolina counties of Allendale, Bamberg, Barnwell, Colleton, Hampton, and Jasper comprise the Promise Zones. The Promise Zone designation was given by the US Housing and Urban Development Agency and the USDA (for rural zones) during the Obama administration. Areas that qualified for the “Promise Zone” designation have high rates of poverty and unemployment. In 2014, 28.12% of the residents in that region were at or below the poverty level and unemployment rate was just below 15%. The median household income was only \$32,705, which is 25% less than the state average and 45% less than the national average. These statistics just touch the surface of the seemingly insurmountable problems in an area of South Carolina that has also been referred to as the Corridor of Shame. Fortunately, the Promise Zone designation provides a way forward through a 10-year funding commitment from the federal government and a thriving, expansive partnership of community organizations committed to revitalizing this area of South Carolina.

In 2015, Clemson University faculty members, including Dr. Robinson, were approached to be involved in the effort to revitalize the area that comprised the SC Promise Zone. Since then, he has been involved at several different levels and has incorporated this opportunity into his courses, including his Fall 2017 class, The Community. Students were divided into six “research teams”, each of which investigated a different social issue effecting residents in the Promise Zone and identified potential solutions.

During the LWVCA November meeting, we heard from two student teams, one investigating health care issues throughout the region and the other researching food issues and food insecurity in the Promise Zone. Jennifer Barnett and Marisol Miranda shared compelling statistics about health problems in the SC Promise Zone. As a result of their team research, the students developed long-term transformational goals to provide health care throughout the region and ultimately transform communities by transforming lifestyles. According to the student team, mobile health clinics offer a short-term solution toward this goal through the provision of primary care, dental care, screenings, blood work, and immunizations to community residents. Reducing healthcare costs and increasing residents’ access to primary care could be some of the boosts these communities need to reach their full potential.

Next, Madison Thatcher and Sellers Pickens informed us about the challenges people in the Promise Zone face when trying to access nutritious and affordable food. The location of the counties in the Promise Zone makes it particularly difficult for residents to access fresh food. In fact, this region has been declared as a “food desert,” an area where there is a limited availability of fresh affordable food. Nationally, 15% of households are classified as “food insecure” and this proportion is even higher in the Promise Zone. One possible solution to this problem is to create a food hub, which is a small county grocery store that often includes a community garden. This would provide assistance to producers (e.g., by linking them to markets) and to consumers (e.g., by offering events like cooking classes and allowing food stamp redemption at the food hub).

Dr. Robinson’s introduction and the student presentations were inspirational, providing us with compelling evidence that this region of our state is moving toward a promising future. We invite our members to learn more about the SC Promise Zone either by contacting Dr. Robinson (krbnsn@clemson.edu) or learning more by visiting the project website (www.scpromisezone.org).

Submitted by Julia Kempton and Catherine Mobley

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Data from the recent *Member Interest Survey* by the Membership Team are providing some surprises and also affirming what we already know. The one-page survey was emailed to all members in November and emailed again in December and January, as well as distributed at monthly meetings. To date, 44 members (44%) have responded, including 18 of our new members (50%) joining between September 2016 - December 2017.

One surprise is the large number of members (32) who are interested in additional social activities. Meals in Restaurants was the most popular (18), followed by Discussion Groups (17), Book Groups (14), and Hiking (13). Some members suggested combining discussion or book groups with meals. (Eleanor Hare has already offered to organize a book group this summer.)

Underscoring member generosity is the number of people (14) who indicated they have special Skills/Talents/Interests to share and the number who indicated they can provide refreshments at member functions. (It should be noted that many already sharing Skills/Talents/Interests did not reply to the skills question.)

Affirming the Leagues' mantra, "*Making Democracy Work*," is the large number of members (33) who stated their willingness to participate in some form of Voter Services activity: Voter Registration (23), Candidate Forums (21), and Voter Registration at Naturalization Ceremonies in Greer (17).

Twelve members indicated interest in the League's Advocacy activities; eleven indicated interest in Program Development.

The Membership Team thanks all who completed the survey!! If you have not, please contact Janet Marsh (jmarsh@clemson.edu). Team members believe that the best way to know members' interests is face-to-face conversation. If you would like to visit with one of us, contact Janet.

submitted by Janet Marsh

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Advocacy Committee met Jan. 11 at Charlotte Holmes home.

Action items: An email was sent out to those potentially concerned with Clemson Land Development Issues. There has been some interest shown in return emails.

Shari Jung will present a program called Healing the Divide on April 17 for the LWV.

Other items of interest: There is a need to create a Redistricting/Gerrymandering educational group to provide information to interested community/civic groups. "Teach Ins" ???

Also, information was shared about Off Shore Drilling off the coast of SC. There will be a rally and educational forum in Columbia, Feb. 13. A bus leaving from the Upstate at 8:00 (place TBA) for a cost of \$3. Visit the following website for info.

<http://www.coastalconservationleague.org/events/resist-offshore-atlantic-drilling-rally-columbia/>

LWV-CA support and were present at Candidate Forum for Youth at University Lutheran on Jan 18. LWV-CA support and were present at Women's Rally in Greenville Jan. 20. LWV-CA support and were present at Dialogue on Race at Abel Baptist Church on Jan. 24.

submitted by Cece Parker

In Memoriam
George Polk

June 21, 1925 - January 7, 2018

George was married for 68 years to Jane Polk, a past President of LWVCA and an active member. George practiced architecture in Florida and was a Professor in the Architectural Department at Clemson University. He was an artist, and left many sketches, designs and paintings for his family. He was a naturalist and conservationist; President of the Audubon Society; a member of the Sierra Club Foothills Group and Forest Watch. George was an avid sailor and served as Commodore of the Gulf Stream Sailing Club and the Keowee Sailing Club.

Ben and I had the pleasure of sailing in the British Virgin Islands with George and Jane. He showed his proficiency in sailing and we had a wonderful time. He was a talented and charming gentleman.

He was a loving father of four children, five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He will be sorely missed.

submitted by Reggie Turetsky

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.

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