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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS  
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Volume 38, Number 1  
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LWVCA President: Della Baker  
*The Voter* Editor: Catherine Mobley

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mon, January 11	Pickens County Legislative Delegation, 5:30 p.m., Six Mile Baptist Church (LWVCA members will make a statement at the meeting.)
Tues., January 19	LWVCA Program Planning Meeting, Meet to develop the LWVCA positions, plan for the convention in Atlanta, etc. 7:00 social time; 7:30 meeting time, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship
Thurs., January 28	LWVCA Board Meeting, Clemson City Council Chambers, 5:00 p.m.
Fri., January 29	LWVCA Book Discussion Group, <i>Going Up the River of Shame</i> , 4:30, at the home of Holley Ulbrich, 106 Highland Drive, Clemson.
Thurs., February 4	<b>**SAVE THE DATE**</b> : LWVCA Candidate Forum for the vacant position on the Clemson City Council, Thursday, February 4, 7: 00 p.m. Central-Clemson Library.

Clemson City Council	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Seneca City Council	2 <sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Pickens County Council	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:00 p.m.
Oconee County Council	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Anderson County Council	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Pickens County School Board	4 <sup>th</sup> Monday, 7:30 p.m. (except July and December)
Oconee County School Board	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Anderson County School Board	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday, 6:00 p.m.
LWV National Office	202-429-1965
LWVCA website	<a href="http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/">http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/</a>

## **President's Message**

### **Some Issues on the Political Horizon for South Carolina**

#### **Cigarette Tax**

H 3684 passed the Senate Finance Committee in the 2009 session but didn't get to the Senate floor for a vote. Both versions of H 3684 added \$.50/pack tax but differed on how the increased revenues would be spent. See additional details in this newsletter (pages 2-3) on how you can help address this issue.

#### **Property and Point of Sale Taxes**

South Carolina's reliance on regressive sales and excise taxes fall disproportionately on the worst-off families and on property taxes. The state's one progressive tax, the income tax, is not enough to offset the unfair impact of other taxes. There is a problem with the Index of Taxpaying Ability (ITA) that will not be fixed by just taking owner occupied residential property out. There are pro-realtor and anti-local government stances on capping the reassessment of property at point of sale. Read more in this newsletter about which counties this impacts.

#### **Voter Access**

A Photo ID bill is being discussed in the state legislature to prevent voter fraud. There are costs associated with the bill's outcome and there would be problems applying it to absentee ballots.

#### **Health Care Reform**

Nationally, act now to express your support of strong health care reform. Tell your state senators that you support strong health care reform.

Plan now to attend the program planning meeting in January. The Program and Action Team will be developing positions for LWVCA. If you have a special interest that you would like us to pursue, send your issue or concern to Holley Ulbrich, chair of the Program and Action Team.

Thank you to the Program and Action Team for coordinating a very informative session with state legislators. Thanks also to the Membership Team for sponsoring an engaging lunchtime dialogue with new and potential members.

Don't forget! Invite someone to join LWVCA. Remind them that:

- LWVCA provides the public with information on candidates and issues where we have a position.
- LWVCA is an alternative source of information.
- LWVCA models and promotes respectful dialogue.
- LWVCA translates complicated information to the lay person.
- LWVCA models active citizenship.

*~ Della Baker, LWVCA President*

**LWVCA January General Meeting:  
Tell it to Washington!  
Tuesday, January 19**

Yes, Tuesday, January 19th is our biennial chance to do some real grassroots work as League members in telling the national League what we want to study and act on. Janet Marsh, Reggie Turetzky, Donna London and Holley Ulbrich will give us some highlights of what's going on and what needs attention in our national positions. We will also be discussing a proposed national education study.

This is an excellent time to invite new and prospective members to be there to get a sense of how League works and to provide their thoughts on where our League's attention and advocacy efforts should focus in the next two years. Please join us on Tuesday, January 19 at 7:30 at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson for this important meeting.

Our input will be combined with input from Leagues across the country as they/we prepare for the national convention, which will be in Atlanta this year from June 11th through 15th. Plan to attend, even for a day, and meet Leaguers from all over the country.

*~ Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

**Political Will Needed  
to Raise SC Cigarette Tax**

Increasing the tax on cigarettes seems a 'no-brainer' to many of us. So, why is the SC Legislature entering the 9th year of discussion without resolution? Reasons abound, but the most recent reason(s) are indecision among supporters about how the increased revenues should be spent and veto by the Governor.

The LWVSC supports a tax increase with revenues going for health care to the non-insured.

Background - H 3684 passed the Senate Finance Committee in the 2009 session but didn't get to the Senate floor. So many compromises were made in the Senate Finance Committee from the version that passed in the House that its chance of passage on the Senate floor was slim. Both versions of H 3684 added \$.50/pack tax but differed on how the increased revenues would be spent. The House version would have directed the funds largely to those without health insurance; the Senate version would have directed the funds to a trust fund which the legislature would allocate at some future point. Additionally, the legislation would have sunset one year later, on June 30, 2010.

Senator Thomas Alexander is credited with moving the bill as far as it got in the Senate and also seeing that it is on the 2010 legislative calendar, ready for debate on the Senate floor. There is concern among supporters, however, that legislators may think there is not enough public will to see the bill passed. Please, let them know that is not true, including Senator Alexander!

Suggested Action - Contact your state legislators, particularly your state senator. Contact can take a number of forms. The best way is to set up a meeting. I call my county legislative delegation office to do that. Others call their legislator directly. If you can't meet face to face, make an appointment to talk by phone. Or, if you prefer, write a letter. Don't send an email.

A Few Talking Points - These are useful; if you have personal experiences, share those!

1. At \$.07/pack, SC has the lowest tax in the country. The national average is about \$1.27/pack!
2. 74% of South Carolinians support the tax increase. (#1 and 2 from United Way of SC report, 2009.)
3. According to *USA Today* (9.21.09), research findings released in September 2009 show a 17% decrease in heart attack rates after communities banned smoking in public places.

4. Tobacco use causes more than 400,000 preventable deaths and costs the nation nearly \$200 billion in health expenditures and lost productivity annually. Cigarette manufacturers reported a 10% decline in sales in the third quarter, 2009, following the \$.62/pack federal cigarette tax increase, which took effect in April 2009, and calls to smoking cessation hotlines increased dramatically. *CDC Weekly Report, 11.13.09.*

*~Submitted by Jan Marsh*

### LWVCA "Hot Topics" Luncheon Held in Anderson County

Our second in a series of "hot topics" lunches was held for Anderson County on December 1st with Rusty Burns, interim county administrator, and Bill West from the county planning department. The dozen or so who attended enjoyed a lively and informative discussion. The final hot topics lunch will be March 30th in Anderson.

This series is intended to offer a daytime League opportunity focus on each of the three counties that we serve, and to give us further discussion to finally adopt a growth management position. The draft growth management position that we will be considering at our annual meeting reads as follows:

"We support intentional and collaborative growth management in the three county (Anderson, Oconee, Pickens) area of South Carolina. We encourage regular consultations among public agencies related to growth and development and local elected bodies—city councils, county councils, and school boards. We also encourage an open and frequent dialogue between those agencies and the general public on growth management. We support the concept of managing growth to preserve and enhance quality of life for all residents, old and new, through the effective and coordinated use of such land use management tools as conservation easements, purchase of development rights, development impact fees, and zoning where appropriate."

*~ Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*



Representative Dan Bowen, Rusty Burns (Interim Anderson County Administrator), and Bill West (from the Anderson County Planning Department, at the Hot Topics Lunch, held at The Bakery in Pendleton on Tuesday, December 1.

### LWVCA Membership Committee Sponsors New Member Luncheons

Since the LWVCA meetings are only once a month, the Membership Team asked new and recent members to join us in informal lunches. That way people get to know each other and begin to ask questions about what the League does and needs to do. On November 12 and November 16 the Membership team met with several new members at Friends Cafe in Clemson. New Members Cheryl Lee, Deb Cantrell, Barbara Hamberg, Kathy Clark, and Sandy McLeod met with the Membership Team, Della Baker and Frances Plotnik.

After filling out some copies of the New Membership Interest Survey, everyone was able to discuss why she joined the League and what she enjoyed doing for the League. Members remembered being asked by other members to join the League. That memory suggests a very simple way to increase our membership. Everyone should ask another friend to join her/him at a meeting, Hot Topics Lunch or League event. Following up on that invitation with calls or future requests reminds people about joining. Since next year is an election year,

there will be additional interest in voting and participation in citizenship.

Since next year also marks the beginning of the 2010 Census, our new members were interested in how they could participate as census counters or questioners. They suggested ways that we could use to overcome the hostility about being questioned on a census. The new members proposed that we solicit opinions about census and voting through newspaper articles or polls to help in the education of the populace before the forms arrive. South Carolina citizens are some of the American voters least likely to fill out their census forms. Since funding for education and other social improvements often relies on accurate census figures, LWVCA members, new and old, should become involved in participation in this important act of American citizens.

To allow for broader participation, the next several membership lunches will be held in Seneca and Anderson.

*~ Submitted by Carol Ward, Membership Chair*

**Calling All Past  
LWVCA Presidents!**

The League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area is committed to ensuring strong organizational leadership and superb programming for our members. To honor past leadership and prepare future leaders, the LWVCA is beginning a campaign this year to raise funds for leadership development and special projects.

I am reaching out to all past Presidents to consider committing the first gifts of support to this initiative with a \$100 contribution. A contribution of any amount will be appreciated. All campaign donors will be recognized.

Your contribution will increase training opportunities to ensure continued excellent League leadership. Trained leaders increase the effectiveness of LWVCA. Scholarships will be made available for leadership development

opportunities during the national convention and will strengthen knowledge in priority areas. In addition, your donation helps support LWVCA financial sustainability. The second phase of the campaign will focus on opportunities for potential external funding. If you would like to give, even if you are not a Past President, please send your donation to LWVCA, P. O. Box 802. Designate the donation for leadership and special projects. If you have questions or need additional Information, contact me by e-mail <dellabaker@yahoo.com> or by phone at 864-650-1955. You will be hearing more about the fundraising campaign in the future from the LWVCA Fund Development Team.

*~Submitted by Della Baker*

**2010 Legislative Advocacy Day  
to be Held February 23, 2010**

LWVSC is co-sponsoring Legislative Advocacy Day on February 23, 2010 with SC AAUW and SC School Improvement Council, with Jean Norman as coordinator. An exciting program is planned on the theme of the impact of health and the environment impact on the school achievement of South Carolina’s children. Though presenters are being finalized at this time, camera-ready information, including registration, will soon be available at the following website: <http://www.lwvsc.org/index.html>. In addition, we will do a statewide member mailing in January. Highlights of 2010 LAD and presenters to date include:

- Introduction of "State of Denial," a new film documentary produced by Bud Ferillo (of "Corridor of Shame" fame), to introduce health and environmental issues that impact student achievement and that can be addressed through state legislation and policy
- Environmental impact--Nancy Vinson, Coastal Conservation League
- Health impact: Panel discussion moderated by Dr. Tiffany Williams, MUSC School of Nursing, Charleston. Topics include nutrition/obesity, cardiovascular disease, teen pregnancy

*~Submitted by Della Baker*

***Going Up the River of Shame: January Book Discussion Group  
to be held Friday January 29***

A small but vocal group met on October 29th to discuss George Lakoff's book, don't think of an elephant, which describes the process of framing in order to get your message across more effectively.

Our next book discussion is on Friday, January 29th at 4:30 at the home of Holley Ulbrich, 106 Highland Drive. The book, recommended by Eleanor Hare, is Thomas Truitt's *Going Up the River of Shame: The Struggle for Education Justice in South Carolina*, about the ongoing court case on SC education funding. You may have to special order it, but it's worth it, and it fits with our state and local focus on education issues for the 2009-2010 year.

The book can be ordered through the publisher, Author House (<http://www.authorhouse.com>), 1-800-839-8640. (ISBN: 9781438939452)

*~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*



Della Baker (l.), LWVCA President, and Michelle Chin, LWVCA President-Elect, spending time together at the annual LWVCA Holiday Party, held at the home of Holley Ulbrich.

Senator Thomas Alexander, Carol Ward and Elinor Baron at the November 17 LWVCA Meeting with the Legislative Delegation.

