



THE VOTER

JANUARY 2012 Vol. 39, No 1

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

President's Message

By the time you read this message, the holidays may be over and with it the end of a good fall season for the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area. Highlights included the holiday party, the local candidate forums, Action Fridays, and three excellent meetings with the legislative delegation, Robin Kimbrough-Melton on children's issues, and the consensus meeting on the federal role in education. Carol Ward, Barbara Hamburg, Bruce Ransom, Holley Ulbrich and Eleanor Hare also went to Hanna High School to talk to four different government classes on registration and voting in South Carolina in December. We have plans for a February wine-tasting fundraiser and some excellent spring meetings, starting with the January 10th meeting on getting ready for a big election year (see elsewhere in this VOTER). That's a particularly good meeting to bring a friend to, a chance to learn about how to participate in the political process in South Carolina.



January also marks the time when we start thinking ahead. Our annual meeting is scheduled for May 1st, so the nominating and budget committees are gearing up to provide a slate of officers and a budget for 2012-13. A bylaws committee chaired by Janie Shipley is also looking at some bylaws changes, most important of which is a change from having a President and President-Elect to having co-presidents with two year staggered terms. Paula Appling and I have been functioning in more or less a co-president mode and it has worked well, because we have complementary skills and interests and because it gives the VP some meaningful work to do while taking some of the load off the President. We will also be thinking ahead on national issues at our program planning brunch on January 29th at my house (see elsewhere in this issue).

So how can you help us to think ahead? If you haven't yet paid your dues, that's a good place to start. \$60 for one member in a household, \$90 for two: send it to Treasurer, LWVCA, P.O. Box 802, Clemson SC 29633-0802. Plan to be at the January meeting and to volunteer to help in some way with all the work we do around primaries and elections. Attend the program planning brunch and give us your thoughts on national issues and priorities. Say yes when the nominating committee calls on you. Attend some of the third Tuesday Action Tuesday lunches at Western Sizzlin' in Clemson and be prepared to advocate on League issues. Join one of our teams—Program and Action would like some new members, Finance and Fundraising needs some help in the Fundraising area, Membership and Hospitality can always use more help in recruiting and orienting new members and getting them to be active, and the Communication and Voter Service team is going to be extra-busy this election year. Let me know if you can serve. Teams meet every few months to plan their work, so it's not about meetings but just about pitching in where you are needed. Continued on page 5

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area
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www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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Della Baker, History and Archives
Arlene Stewart, Nominating Committee

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tuesday, JAN 3 **LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION ANNUAL MEETING**, Rosewood Center, 419 E. Main St., Liberty, 5:00 – 9:00 pm. Contact Becky Todd at 864 850-7070.
- Tuesday, JAN 10 **GENERAL MEETING “VOTING 2012”**, Presented by Eleanor Hare, Ellen Magee, and Holley Ulbrich, CENTRAL-CLEMSON LIBRARY, 7:00 pm-social 7:30 – 9:00 pm-program.
- Tuesday, JAN 17 **ACTION FRIDAY LUNCHEON**, Western Sizzlin, Clemson, noon
- Saturday, JAN 28 **NATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING & BRUNCH**, Home of Holley Ulbrich, 10 am. Bring breakfast food to share.

JANUARY GENERAL MEETING “VOTING 2012”

The January 10th meeting will kick off an election year with a discussion of the voting process. There are three major voting issues this year in South Carolina: new districts, Photo ID, and voting machines. Holley Ulbrich, Ellen Magee, and Eleanor Hare will update us on each of those three issues. Paula Appling will lay out the election schedule from the January 21st Republican presidential primary through the November General Election, including all the offices that are up this year (including the entire state Senate), and will invite you to find a way in which you can help in the League’s efforts to make democracy work this year. We will also ask you to help with our League’s participation in the Youth Vote effort to register high school students in our three counties. Plan to be there on January 10th and get ready for what promises to be a significant and interesting voting year!

~Submitted by *Holley Ulbrich*

~~ACTION FRIDAYS~~ TUESDAYS

This past fall LWVCA had an experiment called **Action Friday** for ten weeks where we gathered at **Western Sizzlin’** at noon on **Fridays** and talked about opportunities to act on **League issues**. Out of that came a lot of good information, a lot of emails and letter-writing and personal contact on issues as diverse as **redistricting, sex education, I-73, and state tax reform**. However, the board concluded that once a week was too often to sustain this program, so starting in January we are switching to once a month—same time, same location, but on the **3rd Tuesday** of the month. We picked the **3rd Tuesday** because the board meets on the **1st Tuesday** and the general meetings are on the **2nd Tuesdays**, so you can think **Tuesday, think League**. On **Tuesday, January 10th** we will have a list of bills to follow on issues of concern to the League at the state and local levels. So mark your calendars and plan to be there if you can. ~Holley Ulbrich

Glancing at Consensus: Federal Role in Public Education

Twenty-five people participated in the consensus meeting regarding the Federal Role in Public Education. The group came to the following conclusions:

* The federal government asks for too much for too little funding. * It should offer grants with an eye toward equalizing spending between rich and poor states and towards innovation. * The government should provide some guidelines regarding curriculum based on national standards, which should be aligned with common core standards. * Students should be assessed and data should be made available to students, their families and their districts. * The federal government should support early childhood education for ALL children. The Consensus Report was due and submitted on November 30.

~Submitted by Paula Appling

Presentation to Pickens County Legislative Delegation – Jan 3, 2012

I am Paula Appling, Vice-President of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about some of our legislative concerns. The League is a membership organization that has worked for informed citizen participation in government in this area for 44 years and has a membership of about 75 members in this area. We study issues at the local, state and national level, adopt positions that we believe are in the public interest, and advocate for those issues. We also provide non-partisan service to voters to help them to register to vote and learn more about candidates through our candidate forums.

The three issues that we are most concerned about today are funding education, transportation, and safeguarding the electoral process. We are aware that you have additional funds this year and also aware that you have many demands for those funds. We would like to see you make a priority of restoring education funding for both public and higher education, which have declined dramatically from previous levels. Our children and young adults are our most important investment in the future of the state. A quality education makes it more likely that they will be employable and less likely that they will wind up in prison. Educated citizens make more informed decisions and are more likely to participate in the political process. Educated consumers make better choices in the marketplace that hold sellers accountable for fairness and product quality, reducing the need for government regulation. Our technical colleges, four year public colleges, and research institutions also play a very important role in economic development, economic opportunity, and quality of life that makes the state an attractive place to live, to work, to play, and to grow a business. Providing lottery-based scholarships does not begin to offset the decline in other state funding for higher education, and for many students, provides no support after the freshman year. We need to reform the way we fund both K-12 and higher education, but we need to reform it with adequate funds to carry out the mission of our schools and colleges.

Our second concern is with the Department of Transportation and specifically with spending on I-73. There are less expensive alternatives that have not been given adequate consideration that would make better use of existing highways SC 38 and US 501. A study by Smart Mobility Inc. estimated the state could turn that route into an expressway for about \$150 million, far less than what it will take to build I-73. I-73 will require a 20 percent state match of federal fund. Decisions about spending on I-73 or other major highway construction are too important to leave to an appointed board. This project involves commitment of funds for a long time period that will limit the resources available for our existing highway system which is in need of significant repairs and upgrades. We are already deeply underfunded for highway purposes because we have one of the lowest gasoline taxes in the nation. Even the trucking industry agrees that the state is not receiving a fair share of gasoline taxes from interstate truckers because of the low gasoline tax rate that enters into the distribution formula. In addition, the transportation board is appointed from judicial circuits, which are very unequal in size and underrepresents the sizeable upstate population. We urge you to look both at the makeup of the DOT board and the role that the General Assembly should be playing in having the final say on important long-term funding commitments.

Finally, as guardians of the democratic process we continue to be concerned about the integrity of the state's iVotronic voting machines. Audits by the League of Women Voters of South Carolina have disclosed that over two thousand votes were incorrectly certified in the 2010 General Election. As long as South Carolina uses its present voting equipment, audits and recounts of the vote cannot be done directly by officials. Without the ability to verify that the reported vote totals are the same as the vote cast, a correct count of the vote cannot be assured. We support replacing the current voting equipment with a system that uses hand-marked paper ballots, which can be recounted by hand when necessary. The League is much more concerned about the demonstrated problems with correctly reporting the vote cast than with the Voter Photo ID legislation taken last year to reduce the very limited possibility of voter fraud. The combination of Photo ID and the iVotronic machines threatens the integrity of the electoral process but depriving many legitimately qualified South Carolina citizens from voting while at the same time failing to ensure that the votes we cast are fully and accurately counted.

GLANCING AHEAD TO FEBRUARY: "WHAT'S GOING 'GREEN' IN CLEMSON"

In June 2011 Clemson Area Transit (CAT) moved into its new "Green" headquarters on 200 West Lane off Highway 93 between Clemson and Central. This facility has been called "a showcase of transit facilities and the first and only one of its kind." It has 7000 square feet that provides office space, a bus operator's area, a break room with kitchenette, and large conference room. There is also a covered garage that houses up to 35 buses with an automated bus washer.

This "Green" facility is energy-efficient and eco-friendly, making use of solar panels, heat resistant windows, efficient heating and cooling systems, energy lighting, pervious parking areas and recycling storm water. There is also a recharging station for hybrid electric vehicles. The solar panels will convert sunlight into electricity and also generate hot water for washing the buses. There are a conventional electrical system and hot water heaters for backup. Solar energy can be stored and used in adverse weather conditions.

On February 14 leaguers will have an opportunity to tour CAT's "Green" facility, hosted by executive director Al Babinicz. Following the tour, Dr. Ken Marsh, Chair of the Clemson Green Ribbon Committee, will update us on the latest "green" initiatives undertaken by the city of Clemson. More information in next VOTER.

~Submitted by Sandra Gray. Some material taken from The Clemson Connection, Clemson's Quarterly Newsletter, Fall 2011.

NATIONAL PROGRAM PLANNING: GRASSROOTS COMMUNICATE WITH LWVUS

Every January, our League and Leagues across the country take time to offer some direction to the National League in preparation for its convention in June. The next National convention will be in Washington, DC on June 8-12, 2012. We review national positions to see which ones we want to keep, drop, or revisit and possibly revise. These national positions are organized by major areas and include protecting representative government, international relations, natural resources, and social policy. Under each heading there are anywhere from five to a dozen specific positions (home rule for the District of Columbia, direct election of the president, public participation in environmental decisions, universal coverage for health care, gun control, etc.) that have been adopted over the years. You can review these positions in brief on our local web site. We can also suggest new national studies or restudying existing positions, and we can recommend action priorities for the next two years.

This year our program planning meeting will be a brunch from 10 am. to 12 noon on January 28th at the home of Holley Ulbrich, 106 Highland Drive, Clemson. Beverages and paper goods will be provided; bring something simple to share (a fruit salad, a breakfast casserole, breads, etc.) This event offers a good opportunity to take a look at the full range of League interests and concerns at the national level and contribute your thoughts. It's especially good for new and prospective members to learn more about LWV program.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

VOTING RIGHTS AND THE ELECTION PROCESS

96-year-old Chattanooga Resident Denied Voting ID: Tennessee is one of seven states that recently passed new voter photo ID laws requiring voters to obtain a state issued photo ID as a prerequisite to voting. At 96, Dorothy Cooper remembers only one election that she missed during the years she's been eligible to vote. Despite her stellar voting record, getting a new ID for Dorothy ended up being much more difficult than you might think. Her story in the free times press (<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2011/oct/05/marriage-certificate-required-bureaucrat-tells/>) illustrates how these new barriers to voting can have an unfair impact on long-time voters, and why the League continues to fight against such barriers across the country.

New Laws Could Negatively Impact 5 Million Eligible Voters: A new study released by the Brennan Center for Justice this month found that up to five million people could be negatively affected by the various new voter suppression laws that were passed this year in states across the country. See the New York Times: (http://www.nytimes.com/2011/10/03/us/new-state-laws-are-limiting-access-for-voters.html?_r=3&pagewanted=2) that includes a quote from League of Women Voters of Florida President Deirdre Macnab.

League-Voice, October 2011



The League of Women Voter of the Clemson Area bid a fond farewell to Robin Kimbrough-Melton, who has been an active member of the Clemson League for more than ten years and has served on the state League board. Robin has been active in working with women in prison and children of prisoners, and will be relocating to Denver, Colorado. Shown in the photo are Robin and local League president Holley Ulbrich presenting her with a check for a program called Building Dreams, which works with children of prisoners in Oconee and Pickens Counties.

~Eleanor Hare



Voter Education at Hanna High School



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued from page 1

Presidential election years are always exciting and busy times for the League, especially this year with the challenge of Voter ID, election of the entire S.C. Senate and House, and new lines for precincts, county and school board districts, legislative and Congressional districts. But remember that half of the League's focus is elections. The other half is the informed participation part, where we study and act on issues at the federal, state, and local levels. Try to attend as many of our 2nd Tuesday general meetings as you can as well as 3rd Tuesday Action lunches and hot topics lunch meetings (more to come on those). We love all our members, active and inactive, but we want all of you to get as much as you can out of your membership in LWVCA by being an active participant. Make that a New Year's resolution.

Holley H. Ulbrich



Arriving at Consensus on the Federal Role in Public Education

Linda Gahan gives background information for this study. Other presenters were Paula Appling, Reggie Turetzky, Cheryl Lee, Claudette Bennett and Carol Kozma.

OBSERVER CORPS

Clemson City Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:30 pm.	Anderson County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm
Seneca City Council	2 nd Tuesday, 7:00 pm.	Pickens County School Board	4 th Monday, 7:30 pm.
Pickens County Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:00 pm.	Oconee County School Board	3 rd Monday, 6:00 pm.
Oconee County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm.	Anderson Co. School Board	3 rd 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 _____

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.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

P. O. Box 802
Clemson, SC 29633

[Recipient]

Address Line 1

Address Line 2

Address Line 3

Address Line 4