



# THE VOTER

January 2017 Vol. 44 No. 1

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

## Message from the President

January will provide many opportunities for participation in League activities. We will speak to our Legislative Delegation, reach consensus on Health Care, launch the Good Government Issue Group, launch our Advocacy groups, support Earth Dialogue's meeting and attend LEAD Day in Columbia.



An assessment of 2016 reveals a very active and productive year. We worked diligently to register voters, educate voters and ourselves, and enjoy a few festive occasions.

Led by Cheryl Lee, approximately a third of our membership assisted as we **registered 1,363 new voters**. Voter registration efforts reached every high school in Pickens and Oconee Counties, 2 high schools in Anderson County, Clemson University, Southern Wesleyan University, Tri-County Tech and a variety of other venues.

We held educational general meetings on education in SC, criminal justice, the status of women in SC, SC roads, apportionment, and higher education in SC. A consensus meeting was held on Money in Politics.

We organized 10 candidate forums and observers reported on 12 public meetings. Intiaz Haque spoke to us about the SC Energy Innovation Center at our Annual Dinner in May. We celebrated Women's Equality Day (with music provided by Six Chickens and a Beer) in August, raised funds with a wine tasting in March, and welcomed the holiday season (again with Six Chickens and a Beer) in December.

We published eight issues of the newsletter, packed with League news, educational information and even a book review. We were also joined by 15 new members.

As we begin a new year, please consider taking part in an Advocacy Group. These groups utilize information posted on our members-only web site (see Medicare and ACA articles). Although only our president may write letters in the name of the League, we can all write (or call) as individuals. By providing current information from reliable sources and sharing with each other, we hope to make contacting legislators less daunting.  
*Eleanor Hare*

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### THE VOTER

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](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org)

#### OFFICERS:

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Holley Ulbrich, Co-President  
Catherine Watt, VP/Program & Action  
Ann Russell, Secretary  
Bill Hare, Treasurer

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Patty Warner  
Sandra Gray  
Cheryl Lee  
Janet Marsh  
Catherine Farris

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Paula Appling, Mem. Co-Chair  
Elaine Laiewski, Publicity Chair  
Diana Stafford, *Voter* Editor

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Tuesday, Jan. 3, Board Meeting Cancelled**

**Monday, Jan. 9, Pickens County Legislative Delegation** 5:30-7:00 pm Six Mile Town Hall Community Room 106 S Main St.

**Tuesday, Jan. 10, Issue Group - Good Government** 12:00 Western Sizzlin 898 Tiger Blvd. Clemson

**Tuesday, Jan. 17, General Meeting -Health Care Concerns** 7:15 Olli Building

**Monday, Jan. 23., Earth Dialogue - Solar and Wind Again** 6-7 pm Moe Joes Coffee Shop

**Saturday, Jan. 28, LEAD DAY** Columbia, SC

**Tuesday, Jan. 31, Board Meeting** 5 pm Central-Clemson Library small conference room.

**Saturday, Feb. 4, Program Planning Lunch - State and Local Program** 11 am-1 pm Ye Olde Sandwich Shoppe, 124 N Townsville St. Seneca

**Tuesday, Feb. 7, Board Meeting Cancelled** (See Jan 31)

**Tuesday, Feb. 21, General Meeting Solar and Alternative Energy** 7:15 pm Olli Building

**Monday, Feb. 27, Earth Dialogue - Food Choices** 6-7pm Moe Joes Coffee Shop

**Saturday, Mar. 11, Wine Tasting Fundraiser TBA** Gignillat Center Seneca



Christmas  
Party

Earth Dialogue meets at Moe Joes Coffee Shop and Wine Bar 385 Old Greenville Hwy, Clemson

Check current ;information on the web site:[clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org](http://clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org)

**LEAD DAY Jan. 28, 2017**

LWVSC is planning another great Leadership, Education, and Advocacy Day for Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> with the focus of Making Democracy Work at the Statehouse and across SC. The meeting is from 9 am to 3 pm at the South Carolina Education Association building on Zimalcrest Drive in Columbia.

Clemson Leaguers will be carpooling, and if you let Bill Hare know you are coming by January 20 we will pay your registration fee of \$20 for materials and lunch. It's a good opportunity to meet League members from around the state and gear up for the new legislative year.

The program should have something of interest for everyone. Our registered (but unpaid) lobbyist Lynn Teague will let us know what's at the top of the agenda for the new legislative session. Patrick Dennis, Speaker of the House's Counsel and former Chief Counsel of the House Judiciary Committee, will share his insights on how the SC legislature works. Amy Armstrong, the Executive Director and General Counsel of the South Carolina Environmental Law Project will give us an update on the latest on environmental advocacy in South Carolina. There will also be networking time as local Leagues share ideas for programs and program planning.

*by Holley Ulbrich*

**January General Meeting**

Is there anything more complicated than health care politics? Well, our meeting on January 17<sup>th</sup> is the time to come learn more and voice your own thoughts. Dr. Bonnie Holaday, Professor Emeritus of Nursing will lead our discussion of the League's health care consensus. After all, we are now hearing about changes to Medicare and Medicaid, as well as the possible repeal of the Affordable Care Act. Is there room for competition in South Carolina or are we stuck with only Blue Cross Blue Shield?

As we all get older, challenges include pre-existing conditions, complex hospital conglomerates, and being a very informed patient. More of us are working for ourselves or working part-time, meaning that "company" health care isn't an option. What does that mean to the insurance pool? Is there any single right answer that is best? As you can see, we end up with more questions than answers.

*continued p.5*

## Health Care Consensus

The January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting is something unique to League. When we advocate saying, “The League supports...” we mean exactly that. We have met, studied, discussed, and reached a position that is the basis for our advocacy and action. Because the national League position on health care, adopted in 1993, gives little guidance to acting on state policy in 2017, we as a League chose to study health care issues with a focus on having more people with access to coverage at an affordable price.

The LWVUS health care position, adopted in 1993, calls for to integrated, quality care with universal access and true cost containment in a single payer system. Most other industrialized nations have adopted single payer systems and have found them to be both effective and efficient. The US, with a patchwork of government programs, job-based insurance, and private plans, is ranked 37<sup>th</sup> for health care outcomes care but pays twice as much per person as any other nation.

When the Obama administration sought to improve health insurance through the Affordable Care Act of 2010, South Carolina resisted. Our state refused to set up an insurance exchange for a number of reasons. On one hand, the Governor’s health care committee found that “federal subsidies are solely a federal concern in which the state has no compelling interest” while later in their report saying “It is recommended that the state move forward with a plan to retain control over any marketplace reforms in South Carolina.” The committee also concluded that inaction was a good idea due to “uncertainty as to how the Supreme Court might rule next summer should it choose to hear challenges to ACA as well as what changes national elections might bring.” The committee also noted that “The only organization capable of implementing the requirements of a state based exchange is the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.” Since the department’s resources were “fully committed now to serving approximately 900,000 persons” the state would then have to incur the cost of serving an additional 500,000 to 600,000 who would become eligible under Medicaid expansion.

When the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of Obamacare, it left open to states the option to expand Medicaid to the poor. Currently, the federal government pays 70% while the state pays the remaining 30% for residents who make less than 62% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The ACA plan would bring all states up to 138% of FPL by paying 100% for the first three years. In later years, the state would assume a small percentage through 2020 when the state match would be 10%.

The Governor promised that “We will not expand Medicaid on President Obama’s watch. We will not expand Medicaid ever.” Yet the challenge did not go away. Rural medical centers like the one in her home town (Bamberg) closed because of unfunded care. An offer from the South Carolina Hospital Association (SCHA) to “eat” the 10% match the state would eventually have to pay did not change this position. The state League, in concert with AARP, the United Way, SC Appleseed, and faith-based groups, has pushed for Medicaid expansion. CloseTheGap.SC has identified 197,000 South Carolinians who fall in a gap above the 62% of the federal poverty level that would qualify them for Medicaid already but below the 100% of poverty level required to receive federal insurance premium support.

So come to the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting prepared to voice your opinions and help us to develop a state position that will give us some guidance on how to address this issue with South Carolina legislators.

*submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

## Can We Save Medicare?

Privatizing Medicare is being seriously considered by Congress. Proponents of privatization are louder and have more power than in previous years. If we do not speak out, we may lose Medicare for ourselves and future generations.

How would privatizing Medicare affect you? Does it mean taking medical decision-making away from you and your doctor and giving it to for-profit insurance companies? These insurance companies exist for their stockholders' profits, not for your medical health.

Before 1966 insurance companies decided who they would insure. If an individual with a pre-existing condition was able to buy insurance, there were high premiums and waiting periods before the insurance took effect.

If there are few voices speaking out for retaining Medicare, there is serious danger of losing it.

Most of us do not feel comfortable contacting our legislators to express opinion; but, if we want to preserve Medicare it is imperative that we make our voices heard. What actions are we willing to take? Are we willing to write a letter to a legislator? Call a legislator? Write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper? Help others draft letters? Encourage our friends to call or write? **If we lose Medicare, will it be because we have not written letters and called legislators? Surely, we can overcome our reticence because of the importance of our mission**

Our League has set up web pages to ease the difficulty of making our voices heard. These web pages have information on how to contact our legislators, copies of letters written by others, and news articles. The web site is

<http://clemsonarea-members.sc.lwvnet.org/ADVOCACY.html>

Please, let your voice be heard now. And, let it be heard often. YOU can make a difference!

*Submitted by Eleanor Hare*

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*continued from p. 3 January General Meeting*

Health care has become about politics and economics, developing into a private good. We will learn more about how South Carolina stacks up in its health care policies, how well our policies serve children and seniors, those with mental health issues and long-term care needs. Do we advocate for medical marijuana? Perhaps a death with dignity act? Or do we try to manage the Medicaid umbrella for more who are in need? Join us and let's discuss the issues that matter most to us.

It's time for the League to create its health care platform. If you've ever thought about health care and what we need to be doing better to care for SC citizens, please join us – **Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> Olli Building.**

*submitted by Catherine Watt*

## February General Meeting -Solar and Alternative Energy

### Alternative energy costs and benefits: What's new under the sun?

Could solar energy power your home? Does hot air come only out of Columbia? Our February topic is alternative energy and what we need to know about it. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, come learn how advances in technology are making alternative energy more affordable than ever. But it can be difficult to sort through the information and find ways to determine what might work best for your home and to assess what the State should be doing related to alternative energy. Are we maximizing our opportunities? What can we learn from other states, and even countries?

Many of us have grown up around here with nuclear power, hydroelectric power, and the traditional fossil fuels. We take Duke Power for granted and barely think about the lakes that provide our water as well as our power. Now we need our state to step forward and advance new energy sources, helping us make solar, geo-thermal, and wind more affordable for *all* families. As new options arise, however, we also need to be aware of issues surrounding fracking, wind farms (especially on our coastline), and deep water drilling.

*submitted by Catherine Watt*

Please mark your calendar for our February 21st meeting. The topic will be "Reviewing Our South Carolina Energy Policy" featuring Trish Jerman, Energy Manager in the South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff. A tour of a recent solar installation at the home of members Ken and Janet Marsh will be available prior to the meeting. Watch for more details in our next newsletter.

*submitted by Ellie Taylor*

## New Members



Fran and Stuart Rundlett moved to Mountain Rest from Atlanta a few years ago. Both are very interested in

environmental issues, due in part to their long-term interest in outdoor activities. As a League member in CT in the 1970s, Fran chaired the Energy Committee, working to reach consensus on energy issues.



Janet McLeod Scott retired from Clemson University in September 2013. Most of her career was spent working as a plant pathologist in universities (LSU, Mississippi State, and Clemson). She also taught various Biology classes at Midlands

Technical College and Tri-County Technical College.

## Opportunities for Action

### Issue groups

Our first issue group, the Good Government Group, will meet Tuesday January 10<sup>th</sup> at noon at Western Sizzlin in Clemson (I will reserve the room just before the ordering line). I have a list of people who signed up at the holiday party and will send them some notes on the Electoral College as a timely topic worth discussing. If you are not on the list, email [holleyulbrich@gmail.com](mailto:holleyulbrich@gmail.com) and I will send you a copy. Other topics in good government are welcome for future gatherings—there are plenty to choose from! We know that all Leaguers are interested in good government, but this format is geared toward those who prefer a lunch/discussion/informal meeting. So if lunch is a better time for you, and you can get away at lunch time the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, mark your calendar and just show up.

### Program Planning

Sounds boring, right? It isn't. Along with adopting positions that are formulated in a grass roots process, we also choose what to study and what issues to give priority to in the same kind of process. Democracy is important within the League as well as in the larger world. So we will meet for lunch on February 4<sup>th</sup> at Ye Olde Sandwiche Shoppe in Seneca to discuss what state issues we would like to review, revisit, or modify at state convention in April, or whether we want to take on a new issue. We also have local positions on education and growth to review and see if we want to do any updates or extensions. A brief summary of state positions and local positions is available on the LWVCA website. Come join us to think ahead and decide where we want to invest our energies in the next two years!

*submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

### Attend the Delegation Meeting in Six Mile

The Pickens County Legislative Delegation will listen to their constituents on Monday, January 9, 5:30 p.m. at the Six Mile Town Hall. League members who want to address an issue can speak. Or listen. Last year, with the Delegation meeting in Clemson, the turnout was impressive and we had many more people supporting League issues than opposing them.

Your presence is a message to our legislators that we care about what happens in Columbia. Attendance is a loud message. Speaking is a louder message. If you would like to speak, contact Delegation Secretary, Barbara Marcy ([barbaram@co.pickens.sc.us](mailto:barbaram@co.pickens.sc.us)).

Hope to see you there.

*Submitted by Eleanor Hare*

The Clemson area of the League of Women Voters extends sympathy to B.R. and Vickie Skelton on the death of his daughter, Ginger Skelton.

### Gentle Dues Reminder

Your membership dues for 2016-17 are now due since our fiscal year is June 1 through May 31.

Dues are \$60 per membership, \$30 for a second family member, \$25 for students.

Make checks payable to LWVCA

Mail to LWVCA, PO Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633.

Clemson City Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 6:30 pm  
 Seneca City Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 pm  
 Pickens County Council 1<sup>st</sup> Monday, 6:30 pm  
 Oconee County Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 pm

Anderson County Council 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 pm  
 Pickens County School Board 4<sup>th</sup> Monday, 7:00 pm  
 Oconee County School Board 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 6:00 pm  
 Anderson Co. School Board 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org) and contact us at [lwvclemson@gmail.com](mailto:lwvclemson@gmail.com).

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