



LEAGUE LINES

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www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Editor Suzanne Rhodes / Co-editor Sej Harman

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March 2012

CALENDAR & NEWS

MARCH

12 (M) Rita Paul's address to the Girl Scouts

15 (Th) 11:45 AM
Public Policy Luncheon 

15 (Th) 1:15 PM – **Guided Tour of Columbia Museum of Art Exhibit – “Painting America the Beautiful”** - (see p. 4) (reservations required)

15-17 USCWomen's and Gender Studies Conference (see p. 5)

17 **HAPPY ST. PATRICK'S DAY**

Save the Date in APRIL

19 (Th) 11:45 AM **Public Policy Luncheon** with **Bob Schneider**, new Executive Director of CMRTA

Plan ahead...

June 8-12, 2012 – LWV National Convention – Washington, DC (register early)

PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON

Seth Rose, Richland County Council

Thursday, March 15 – 11:45 AM

Capital Senior Center

Seth Rose is the representative for Richland County Council District Five, which includes Five Points, the Vista, the campuses of the University of South Carolina, Allen University and Benedict College as well as surrounding areas and neighborhoods. As a Councilman, Mr. Rose's highest priorities are to spur responsible economic development, reduce street crimes and make neighborhoods safe, and be a good steward of the county's resources by working more closely with the City of Columbia to eliminate inefficiencies.



Mr. Rose will speak on current issues in county government, including some areas in which the League has been especially interested, such as county/city government cooperation, the environment, and transportation. He has been active in all these areas and should have an interesting take on these and other issues.

Mr. Rose is a graduate of the University of South Carolina, where he was a First Team All-America singles tennis player for the Gamecocks, and the USC School of Law. Mr. Rose, a former Richland County Prosecutor, is a trial attorney with the McGowan, Hood, and Felder law firm. He is an active community volunteer and has served for several years as a tennis coach for the Special Olympics of South Carolina.

He and his wife Anna, a pharmacist specializing in geriatrics, are the proud parents of an eight-month-old and are members of Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Reservations preferred:

Susan B James at sc.rr.com or 256-6822

2011-2012 Board: President - Rita Paul; 1st VP - JoAnne Day (Legislative Action); 2nd VP - Carole Cato (Advocacy); Treasurer - Janie White; Secretary - Pat Davy; Directors - Sarah Conrad, Richie Douglas, Pat Forbis, Sarah Leverette (State Liaison), Carol Medich (Voter Services); Pam Craig (Membership). **Nominating Committee (2011-2012):** Pam Craig, Jan Urban. **Off-Board:** Website - Teri Evans; Environmental Affairs - Chester Sansbury; *League Lines* - Suzanne Rhodes (Editor); Communications/Membership - Sej Harman; Telephone Tree - Keller Barron; Public Transit - Lill Mood; Reservations - Susan James.

The Prez Says...

Rita Paul

Spring is in the air and I hope everyone’s daffodils are as spectacular as mine!

Our League held its annual Program Planning meeting on February 9 with about 20 members in attendance. We had a lively discussion, which included a bit of wine and pizza! **Keller Barron**, our facilitator (many thanks to Keller!!) introduced the discussion with a review of the LWVUS process, which can focus on 1) review of an existing position, 2) a new study, 3) concurrence with a position, or 4) no recommendation. Special thanks go to the LWV of the Clemson Area for the work they did on reviewing an existing position regarding Citizen’s Right to Vote. After discussion it was agreed that we support Clemson’s proposal for review. This information was sent as our recommendation to National. For a complete overview of this very important part of the League, I encourage you to read the excellent synopsis of our meeting by **Lynn Teague** (page 6).



With regard to Local League positions it was suggested that we review Columbia LWV positions and, in particular, continue our discussion and focus on the review of proposals for a strong mayor system of government. Again, please let **Sarah Leverette** know of your interest in this area.

As you can see on page 4 **Carol Medich** continues her excellent work with voter registration! Volunteers are ALWAYS welcome!

Again in 2012, there are measures on the legislative agenda that will restrict the access of eligible South Carolina citizens to voting. H. 4549, on the House agenda this week, would impose burdensome, unnecessary and costly restrictions on voter registration. This bill would make voter registration drives by nonprofits like the LWV extinct because of procedural burdens and potential exposure to fines, as happened in Florida with a similar measure. **JoAnne Day** and **Lynn Teague**, along with others who are able to attend, were at the State House on Tuesday, February 21, distributing a facts sheet which is attached to this addition of League Lines.



Special thanks to our own **Elaine Faithful**, Program Manager for the Coalition for Healthy Families, for an informative talk and discussion regarding the war on women’s health. Go to www.datelinecarolina.org/.../freedom-of-conscience-bill-sent-... for coverage of Elaine’s presentation by a USC publication. There is also a recap of Elaine’s presentation in this edition of *League Lines* (page 3).

Our nominating committee will be convening soon to prepare a slate of officers to be presented at our Annual Meeting in May. You may be called! However, do not be shy—if you have an interest in serving on our board, please do not hesitate to call me or **Pam Craig** and express your interest. Several positions, including 2nd VP and Secretary, will be open in our next “league” year.

The LWVUS convention will be in Washington, DC, in June. While we are limited to two *voting* delegates, anyone can certainly attend convention. Please visit www.lwv.org to view the specifics of the convention.

As always, thanks for all each and every one of you continue to do on behalf of the Columbia area League!

Rita

On February 20th, the League wished **Keller Barron** a Happy 80th Birthday, noting just a few of her many gifts to the League.

Keep on keepin’ on, Keller!

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| Kindness | Beauty |
| Excellence | Action |
| Leadership | Reason |
| Laughter | Reality |
| Education | Orderliness |
| Resolve | Nerve.... |

February Policy Luncheon Recap

Elaine Faithful spoke at our February Public Policy Luncheon. Elaine is a League member and the program manager of the South Carolina Coalition for Families (SCCHF), whose mission is to reduce unintended pregnancies, HIV/AIDS and abortions in South Carolina by increasing access to medically accurate information, family planning services, and reproductive health care. She is not a “big bucks lobbyist,” but she does provide everyone who asks with the facts based on scientific information and actual studies. The SC League is a member of SCCHF.

If you are concerned about the future of women and their opportunity to achieve their personal goals, you should be concerned about some of the issues Elaine brought to our attention. Legislation across the nation is being written—and in too many cases, passed—to dismantle the health care choices of women. In the first six months of 2011, 19 states enacted 162 new provisions related to reproductive health and rights.

In South Carolina, over a dozen bills were introduced in 2011 that seek to bar access to abortions as a medical option for women—even if they are victims of rape, incest, or when the woman’s life is endangered. Recently, at the SC State House, Elaine’s Coalition has been working on a bill (H. 3408) which passed the House and is being considered in the State Senate. The bill would “prohibit an employer from dismissing, demoting, suspending, disciplining, or discriminating against an employee who refuses to participate in certain medical procedures as a matter of personal conscience.” Elaine explained that this bill essentially demonstrates the attitude of some legislators that one person’s right to good health is less important than another’s right of conscience.

For just one example: a victim of rape comes to the emergency room late one night for help and, after administering a “rape kit,” the nurse prescribes an emergency contraception (EC) for the victim. (EC is a time-sensitive medication which must be taken within 72 hours to most effectively prevent pregnancy. A woman’s likelihood of becoming pregnant increases the longer she waits to take EC.) However, *under this bill the hospital pharmacist on duty that night can refuse to dispense the medication based on his moral objection to birth control, even for victims of rape.*

Ironically, on the same day that Elaine spoke at our policy luncheon, a panel of “experts” on women’s health policies was invited to a Congressional Committee in Washington, DC, to discuss President Barack Obama’s proposed birth control policy requiring employers to provide contraceptives to their workers without a co-pay. The panel consisted *only* of men, *all* over 40, who were heads of religious organizations.

Such news is alarming to those of us who are old enough remember “the days”—and notice I did not add “good ole” because they were not. I remember the fear I had the first time I heard about a “coat hanger abortion.” I’m not going back to that fear; and I refuse to let young women today to even understand what I’m talking about. **Make that phone call to your representative and speak up for women’s right to all health care options.**

Pam Craig



League Media Stars!

Several members have been seen and heard recently in regard to the proposed 3rd party voter registration legislation.

JoAnne Day did a radio call-in show with Teresa Arnold, Advocacy Director for AARP, on “Urban Scene with Don Frierson.” Lots of calls, lots of interest on the topic.

Rita Paul was interviewed by P.A. Bennett on ETV’s *Connections* on Friday, February 24, at 7:30 pm.

Lynn Teague spoke about H 4549 with Robert Kittle of WSPA Spartanburg, News Channel 7. A video link and text version explain this bill, which will restrict the access of eligible South Carolina citizens to voting. For more:

<http://www2.wspa.com/news/2012/feb/22/sc-house-postpones-debate-voter-registration-bill-ar-3281311/>

LWVSC President Barbara Zia appeared on PBS’s Religion and Ethics program on February 17, discussing the impact of the new photo ID law being implemented in the state. The assault on voting rights continues in South Carolina with proof of citizenship requirements and new restrictions on voter registration drive legislation making its way through the legislature this month.

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/episodes/february-17-2012/voter-id/10312/>



Directory Update

New home number for **Martha** and **Al Roblee**:

803-363-0065 (also Al’s cell)



The luck o’ the Irish to you all!

Voter Registration Laws in the 2012 General Assembly

Two bills before the 2012 session of the South Carolina General Assembly would inhibit access to voting rights by South Carolina’s citizens. H.4549 originated in the House of Representatives and would place prohibitive restrictions on individuals and groups conducting community voter registration drives. The other bill is S.304, which requires proof of citizenship from those registering to vote and, like last year’s photo i.d. bill, requires documentation that many citizens may find difficult or costly to obtain. The LWVSC opposes both these bills, because they are part of a concerted and multi-faceted campaign to inhibit voter registration and voting.

H.4549

This bill, first introduced by Rep. Alan Clemmons, was given a favorable report by the House Judiciary Committee and referred for floor debate on January 25, as we reported in the February issue of *League Lines*. Since that time, more than 3800 voters have signed a petition opposing the bill, and that petition has been provided to Rep. Leon Stavrinakis, an opponent of H. 4549. The bill is currently scheduled for floor debate on Tuesday, February 28. Numerous legislators including the Speaker of the House have signed on as sponsors in an all-out effort in support of its passage. However, the League is very involved in educating the public about the bill, and will continue to fight should it survive a House vote and move to the Senate. In support of this effort, the LWVSC has prepared and distributed several fact sheets to House members and others.

S.304

S.304 was introduced by Senator Campsen, and requires documentation of U. S. citizenship for voter registration. On February 1, the bill was reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee with a majority favorable, minority unfavorable report. Sen. John Scott of Richland County has been especially important in opposing this bill.

The bill is modeled closely on a Georgia bill that has received Department of Justice preclearance. Proof of voter registration in another state, or even another county, is not acceptable proof of citizenship under this bill. The proof of citizenship documentation listed as acceptable includes photo i.d.’s from SC DMV or other states with similar requirements; birth certificates, passports, naturalization documentation, or tribal or Department of Indian Affairs registration.

Opposition to this bill has prevented immediate scheduling of this bill for floor debate and at present we do not know when it might be moved forward.

Lynn Teague

Call to Action: Continue to pressure your representatives to keep these bills from proceeding.

VOTER REGISTRATION ACTIVITIES

Voter registration activities are continuing for the Columbia League. Recent events at Midlands Technical College-Airport Campus and A C Flora High School resulted in 46 new registrations. In late February we will have events at Midlands Technical College-Beltline Campus and the University of South Carolina. Thanks to *Susan James* and *Sej Harman* for their assistance.

Carol Medich



Students from A C Flora High School Registering to Vote

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Columbia Museum of Art is displaying the exhibition entitled *Painting America the Beautiful*. It is a series of landscape paintings of the Hudson River Valley of New York. There are 45 paintings in total.

Susan James is a docent at the Museum and will show us the exhibit after our public policy luncheon on Mar.



15. Admission to the exhibit is \$12 for adults or \$10 for seniors. If you are interested, **please let Susan know when you call or e-mail her with your luncheon reservation (by Mar. 13, please)**. We will leave the luncheon about 1:15 and drive to the museum on Main St. The tour will last about an hour. You

may then visit the rest of the collection on your own, if you wish.

This will help to remind us all about the visual beauty of our country. Sometimes the politics makes us forget that it is “America the Beautiful”.

ANNOUNCEMENTS (continued)



Carole Cato has left the Board (but not the League) as advocacy chair to try out new adventures. We will miss her sharp and cheerful analysis of the legislature, but she will have a wider audience!

Carole reports: "I love doing the show ["U NEED 2 KNOW" hosted by Frank Knapp, 1230 WOIC AM] and helping spotlight folks who are so often totally overlooked as well as the history they represent. Will send you an e blast later. Next month is Women's History Month and will have **Keller** and a number of other women to bring some of that history alive for us. *The hope is to fire up more women and have them take a second look at their rights in this state.* Will probably require centuries, but must begin at some point in time."

Look for Carole <http://uneed2know.info/blog/> in her new role.

The Girl Scouts are looking for former members. All you have to do is go on www.girlscouts.org and click on alumnae.



Former Girl Scouts make up 80 percent of women business owners, while 68 percent of women in Congress and five of six governors, including Gov. Nikki Haley, were Scouts. (*State*, 2/24/12)

Read more here:

<http://www.thestate.com/2012/02/24/2165003/100-years-of-girl-scouts-and-counting.html#storylink=cpy>

Rita Paul will be speaking to a group of local Girl Scouts on March 12, in preparation for their annual serving as pages at the Legislature.

Also of Interest.....

**University of South Carolina Women's and Gender Studies Conference
March 17 -27**

The keynote is free and open to the public. There is a charge for the conference because it includes a luncheon, coffee, snacks, a reception and the Saturday tour led by Historic Columbia. Check it out at:

<http://www.cas.sc.edu/wgst/conferences/conference.html>



Caring for the Dead Workshop

When: Saturday, March 10, 2012
11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Lunch provided
Cost: \$10.00

Topics: Legal and Financial Considerations; Engaging Family and Friends; Home Funeral Details; After-death Care

Contact & Registration: Tara McCoy 803.403.9561
tmccoy@greenhavenpreserve.com
www.greenhavenpreserve.com

Location: Greenhaven Preserve, 1701 Vanboklen Road, Eastover, SC
[Submitted as of possible interest by Susan Robinson, Board member of the SC Funeral Consumers Alliance and Executive Director of SC Respite Coalition.]



Pam Craig, who works with the Department of Corrections, recommended a very thought-provoking article, from *The New Yorker* magazine, entitled "**The Caging of America: Why do we lock up so many people?**"



Follow the link below to the article by Adam Gopnik.

<http://www.newyorker.com/services/referral?messageKey=ecfcd6b1b24cf520c372cbd4b3952dac>

If you cannot open this link, let me know and I'll send you the article as a Word or PDF document.

Sej

Columbia Area League of Women Voters Programming Planning

The League of Women Voters is a genuinely grassroots organization. The issues that the organization addresses at the national level are first identified and defined by local groups meeting together. The results of these gatherings are then submitted to the national League and serve as the foundation of national discussions, study, and planning.

On February 9 about fifteen members of the Columbia Area League met for our annual program planning meeting. Keller Barron introduced the discussion with a review of the League of Women Voters program planning process, which can focus on 1) review of an existing position, 2) a new study or program item, 3) concurrence with a position, or 4) no recommendation. This process is central to the League's activities. Joanne Day explained that the League does not advocate any position that has not been addressed through this process of systematic study.

The results of the Columbia Area League deliberations have been submitted by President Rita Paul, and will become part of the foundation for the 50th National Convention in Washington, D.C., on June 8-12, 2012, when the program will be determined for the League for the next two years. Issues can be raised at the National Convention itself, but the League strongly encourages local groups to make their concerns part of the process early, to insure the best discussion at Convention. After the Convention, the program that has been adopted there is implemented by the LWVUS board over the following two years, working with local Leagues.

Review of Existing Positions

Keller introduced two proposals made by the Clemson LWV for review of existing positions. The Clemson group had requested support for their program recommendations.

- “The League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area (SC) proposes that the LWVUS revisit the position on Citizen’s Right to Vote adopted in 1982 as part of our Representative Government position, in order to consider supporting legislation that would set uniform national requirements for registration and voting in electing the president. This proposal is in response to many efforts to discourage registration and voting through requiring Photo IDs and similar methods.”

After discussion it was agreed that we support Clemson’s proposal for a review, with the amendment that the proposal should read “electing the president **and vice president.**” The Columbia LWV agrees that this topic is timely, given the new assaults on voting rights that are proceeding in many states.

- “The League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area (SC) proposes that the League revisit our current positions on water resources under Natural Resources and the United Nations position under International Relations to include protection of the quantity and quality of water flows across international boundaries.

Nations in Southeast Asia in particular have been impacted by China’s water policies, but the situation is not unique to that region and is likely to become an even more serious source of conflict as development and population growth increase conflicts over access to potable water.”

In discussions it was agreed that this is an important topic and that everyone has a right to clean water, but we do not believe that review of this position has the priority that the first does. Comments were made that the issue should be addressed across all geopolitical boundaries (for example, state lines) rather than simply national boundaries. It was suggested that the topic is so complex that it would be difficult to address simultaneously with review of the Citizen’s Right to Vote. The Columbia LWV did not concur with promoting this review at present.

New Position

The Clemson LWV also proposed adoption of a position on the United States Postal Service, which at present is facing substantial financial issues and the possibility of Congressional actions that would make major changes in the agency or even eliminate it.

- “The LWV supports the continued operation of a publicly owned and operated US Post Office. The LWV supports revision of any current laws that are detrimental to the continued operation of a publicly owned post office.”

After discussion it was agreed that this area of concern is very important, but should be covered under the existing national privatization study.

Concurrence with Position

The Washington, DC, LWV has asked for concurrence on Sentencing Reform:

- Title: Sentencing Policy
 1. The LWVUS believes alternatives to imprisonment should be explored and utilized, taking into consideration the circumstances and nature of the crime.
 2. The LWVUS opposes mandatory minimum sentences for drug offenses.

There was discussion of the difference between drug dealing and simple possession. However, it was agreed that “mandatory” is the crucial word in this position, and that the position as currently written allows judicial discretion appropriate to the circumstances. It was decided that the Columbia LWV concurs with this position.

Local League Positions

It was suggested that we should review existing Columbia Area LWV positions on local government issues. Previous discussions have focused on review of proposals for a strong mayor system of government, on shared city/county services, as well as timing of elections. Sarah Leverette has discussed forming a committee on local government issues.

Lynn Teague