



LEAGUE LINES

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www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Editor Suzanne Rhodes / Co-editor Sej Harman

Volume 65, Issue 2

October 2012

CALENDAR & NEWS

OCTOBER

6 (Sa) – Last Day to Register to Vote in SC

15 (M) – 6:00 PM – Public Forum on proposed **PENNY TAX for PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**
co-sponsored by LWV and Sustainable Midlands at 701 Whaley Street

15 (M) – 7:00- 9:00 PM
John Bachman Sierra Club and USC Green Quad - Environmental Issues, Candidates for SC General Assembly

16 (Tu) – 6:00 PM
Richland Two School Board at Richland Northeast High School

18 (Th) – 11:30 AM **Sharp!**
Public Policy Luncheon



NOTE EARLIER START TIME

Corrections in green above.

Public Policy Luncheon
Thursday, October 18, 2012 - 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM
Capital Senior Center

Richland County Council Candidate Forum

We will host several of the candidates running for County Council this year in a Question and Answer Forum.

Questions for the Council may be emailed to Carole Cato at ccato@att.net. Cards will be available at the door for additional questions. **A forum team will determine the order in which questions will be asked and will cull any duplicates. No oral questions from the audience will be allowed.**

Because there will be 10 candidates, if all participate, **ANSWERS will need to be limited to one minute**, thus questioners should take this into consideration. For instance, on transportation, "Give us one reason why you are choosing to support or not support the One Penny increase in sales tax for transportation."

Let's remind each other not to talk during the forum, or demonstrate agreement or disagreement with positions. We can all "explode" after the forum.

Katherine Swartz – Team Leader; Rita Paul – Moderator; Carol Medich – Timekeeper; Marzi Knight – Assistant

Reservations

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

Please respond so we can have your nametag ready and adequate seating. Cost is \$10 if you wish the catered lunch or you may bring your own.

Carole Cato, Forum Chair

2012-2013 Board: President - Rita Paul; 1st VP - JoAnne Day (Legislative Action); 2nd VP – Sally Huguley; Secretary – Martha Roblee; Treasurer – Pat Davy; Directors – Sej Harman (Communications/Membership); Marilyn Knight; Sarah Leverette (State Liaison); Lynn Teague (**Advocacy**). **Nominating Committee (2013-2014):** TBA. **Off-Board:** Voter Services - Carol Medich; Website - Teri Evans; Environmental Affairs - Chester Sansbury; *League Lines* - Suzanne Rhodes / Sej Harman (Co-Editors).

The Prez Says...**Rita Paul**

October can certainly be a big month for the League, but is especially so in the Octobers leading up to a general election. No task is bigger or more important to the mission of the League than voter registration! Thanks to **Carol Medich** and her dedicated volunteers for the numerous drives and events that have been conducted in September and continue through the first week in October.

Our Public Policy luncheon on September 20th was a great event! Special thanks to **Martha Roblee** for securing her sister and brother-in-law, Wendy Young and Juan Osuna, in delivering the meaningful presentation on immigration issues. It was a great and well attended event. Please see **Pam Craig's** article (page 3) summarizing their presentations.



With regard to our luncheons, please consider volunteering to assist at one of our luncheons by committing to arriving a bit early to help set up and stay about 30 minutes after the conclusion of the program for cleanup. **All you need to do is sign up for 1 month.** Please let me or Susan James (susanbjames@sc.rr.com) know of your availability.

Our October luncheon (**Thursday the 18th**; see article on page 1) is shaping up to be a great event. We will host the 10 candidates that are running for Richland County Council seats in a question and answer forum. **Carol Catoe** is leading a group of our volunteers as forum leaders and has developed our policy to oversee these events. **Katherine Swartz**, League member and Columbia Chamber of Commerce staff member, will lead our October event at the luncheon. Other events on the calendar include:

On October 15, beginning at 6 pm, the League is co-sponsoring, with *Sustainable Midlands*, a public forum to share information with the public on the proposed referendum on the penny tax for public transportation. **Bob Schneider** and **Betty Gregory** will be on hand to share CMRTA's vision for our transit system. The event will be held at 701 Whaley Street. Please come and support this event!

October 15, 7 – 9 pm, John Bachman Sierra Club and USC Green Quad, Environmental Issues, Candidates for SC General Assembly.

October 16, 6 pm, Richland Two School Board at Richland Northeast High School.

Keller Baron has enlisted the assistance of past presidents and League leaders in a "Search and Gather Brigade" to gather past information about our League for deposit at the Modern Political Collection at USC. We are discussing and hoping to have a 65th celebration party (yes, 65th!) to share and celebrate. Stay tuned for more information on this.

As always, the board and I look forward to working with you and to hearing from you as we move our League forward!

Rita

League of Women Voter of the Columbia Area Agenda for Action – Public Policy Positions

Transportation – Richland County Transportation sales tax increase

The LWV of the Columbia Area supports the ordinance to levy and impose a 1% sales and use tax, within Richland County, to finance the costs of county transportation-related projects, including mass transit systems, highways, roads, greenways, bike paths, and sidewalks.

The LWV of Columbia also supports the issuance by Richland County of general obligation bonds not to exceed \$450 million, payable from the 1% sales and use tax, to fund the county transportation-related projects.

Background/Action: This position was adopted and approved by the Board of Directors in September, 2012

(see additional articles on page 4 and how to order a yard sign in support of the Penny)



IMMIGRATION ISSUES
HIGHLIGHTS OF SEPTEMBER
PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON

The first luncheon was a hot and ongoing topic—immigration on two interesting levels.

Martha Roblee, our board secretary, had an inside track on our two speakers. Wendy Young, Executive Director of KIND (Kids in Need of Defense), is her younger sister; Juan P. Osuna, Director of EOIR (Executive Office of Immigration Review), is her brother-in-law.

Juan addressed how immigration policy affects all areas of our national lives—economic, cultural, education, healthcare, elections, and even our criminal justice system.

One of the biggest problems is finding the proper balance between federal and state responsibilities as the on-going fight between the federal government and some of the border states emphasizes. Immigration has become the third rail of politics because no matter what position you take, 50% of the population will be against you.

Juan's presentation gave me insight on a part of the immigration problem that I have never fully thought about. The EOIR handles removal cases, those people being deported, in 60 courts around the country dealing with approximately 300,000 cases a year. Most of the cases fall into three categories: 1) People who came to America legally and then overstayed their welcome. This category includes students, visitors and workers whose visas expired. 2) People who have entered the US legally, and then have committed a crime and therefore should be deported. 3) People seeking protection from a foreign government, usually identified as political asylum.

Both sides of the political spectrum are dissatisfied with the way the current system works and both agree that the following issues need to be addressed. Providing employers with sufficient numbers of workers. A revamping of the antiquated laws must address a reliable verification system for employers to hire workers, and a solution to the undocumented 10-12 million people. Homeland Security can only deport

about 400,000 persons a year and a decreasing budget exacerbates the challenge to use limited resources in those areas that would be most effective. A tier system is being considered to address the issue of long-term residents who have committed no violations since their arrival. This is the basis of the "Dream Act." Instead of chasing young people who came here as young children with their parents, and have been solid citizens, focus on those who are here and have committed crimes.

If Juan's story was informative, Wendy's story was heartrending. Microsoft Corporation and Angelina Jolie founded KIND (Kids in Need of Defense). Its purpose is to provide legal counsel to young children who come to this country unaccompanied by a parent or legal guardian. My first question: Why would you send your child off by themselves? The reasons include fleeing violence, food insecurity (e.g. crop failures), war, natural disasters (e.g. earthquake in Haiti), poor economies, joining other family members, and just plain old human trafficking. Still, to send a child off alone would be a great sacrifice for any parent to make.

The custody and care of unaccompanied children was originally the responsibility of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). Due, in part, to the efforts of people like Wendy, the responsibilities were transferred to the Department of Health and Human Services. The children range in ages from two to nineteen, and KIND has defended children as young as five. They have approximately 4100 children in their system. If the children do not have family members in the country to be responsible for their supervision, they are detained, yes, kept in confinement until their case is decided. About 60% of the children end of being able to remain in the country. The others are deported and dropped off at the airport in their home country. Don't ask....

It was a totally different look at immigration. I always enjoy the interesting topics and the camaraderie of League Public Policy Luncheons, but this was special. I hope to see you at the October Luncheon. Note changes in time and format for this event.

Pam Craig, Membership Chair

To renew or initiate League membership ON-LINE:

Go to www.lwvcolumbiasc.org, click on "JOIN US" in left menu, and choose your level of membership.

Meet Your Board - Martha Roblee



Martha Roblee joined the League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area in the fall of 2011 and was elected in May 2012 to the position of Secretary. Martha is a Certified Public Accountant in the states of New York and South Carolina. She is semi-retired and is a sole practitioner providing specialized income tax services to businesses.

Martha is a volunteer legislative advocate for the South Carolina chapter of AARP, co-coordinator of the Friday Night Dances at the Capital Senior Center, volunteers at Howlmore Animal Sanctuary, and precinct 2nd vice president for Richland County Democratic Party. She and her husband **Al** (also a member of the League) live in Columbia with their two beloved and very spoiled cats. Other interests include ballroom dancing, Pilates, and mystery books.

Report on City of Columbia Issues City Council*

Item 1: Richland County Transportation Penny

Columbia City Council (CC) met on Tuesday, September 18, 2012. The first item of discussion/action was on the Richland County Transportation Penny, presented by Councilor Brian DeQuincey Newman (Chair of the CMRTA and CC liaison to the Joint Transportation Committee). He assured the constituency that *CC does not intend to double-dip in any funds related to transportation*. CC then voted unanimously to affirm CC's intention at the appropriate time to *reduce the franchise fee from 5% to 3%, if the Penny Sales Tax referendum is successful*.

CC also stated that it wants the proper information out there for the electorate to be voting in November and it was noted that city residents supported the referendum two years ago. Ms. Wilson, Assistant City Manager, was directed to coordinate with county staff to be of assistance to Richland County as needed.

Martha Roblee

* [Report to Board on Oct. 1; edited for *League Lines*. Sej]

HELP NEEDED



Carole Cato reports that the **Richland County Election Office** is swamped and would really appreciate help from League members.

Contact Lillian McBride at the Voter Registration Office - 576-2240. 2020 Hampton Street on the lower left side of the County Building



League Media Stars!

You, too, can be a media star!

On **September 23**, **Lynn Teague** spoke on voting on Cynthia Hardy's **OnPoint radio show** (at length) and TV show (briefly). On **September 29** she spoke at the Richland County Public Library on voting and advocacy to an audience of 3 librarians and 1 concerned citizen, with brief visits by Jim Felder and Lillian McBride. I don't take this last one personally -- the roads were closed for a race and a Vista event.

Rita Paul will be speaking later in the month (October) to Leadership Columbia.

On **September 19**, **Martha Roblee** took part in "Let's Talk with Carole Cato," which airs every Wednesday at 4:07 pm on Frank Knapp's "U Need to Know" (WOIC - AM radio station 1230). Martha introduced her sister, Wendy Young, who provided background on KIND (Kids in Need of Defense). [See page 3 for report on the September PPL, at which Wendy and her husband, Juan Osuna, spoke.]

Today, **October 3**, **Carol Medich** will talk about voter registration, where to register, what you need to register, absentee voting, the **Saturday deadline and hours for local county registration offices**, and registering and voting on the same day (yes, this is possible with proof of residence).

All "Let's Talk with Carole Cato" interviews are streamed live and archived at uned2know.info.

Columbia League is on the Grow...

Total Members	130
Renewed	75
New	11
Returning	2
Moved	1
Need to Renew	41

Janie White

Note - Please update your directory / email lists:
Ann Maletic - annmaletic@gmail.com

“Search and Gather Brigade”

Materials documenting the history of the Columbia League of Women Voters will be donated to the USC Modern Political Collections, where library personnel will catalogue and make them available for research. Our Brigade is an ad hoc group which will coordinate the collecting items during October and November, and delivering them to the library by year’s end.

Materials may be delivered to one of the members below, or arrangements can be made for pick-up. We also can provide thumb drives for electronic files or boxes for papers. Copies can be made of special materials you may want returned.

We are seeking booklets, minutes and agendas, newsletters, studies, pamphlets, buttons and badges, special programs, correspondence, news articles, posters, displays, and, especially, photographs...ETC.

The Columbia League has been an important organization in the Midlands for more than half a century, and we hope that future generations will be able to appreciate the League’s impact through researching these materials.

Search and Gather Brigade members are Keller Barron, Leader; Sej Harman, Lucille Mould, and Betsy Oakman.

For further information about this project OR to arrange to donate your materials, please contact **Keller** at 771-4458, kellerhb@att.net.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

● The **Lexington-Richland Five Teacher Forum** and district-wide **School Improvement Councils (SICs)** across the district have organized non-partisan public forums with candidates for school board. On **Nov. 6**, voters in the district will elect four members: **two** representing Lexington and **one** Richland counties. *Candidates: Lexington* - Jan Hammond (I), Jondy Loveless, Beth Burn Watson (I), and Ed Yates; *Richland* - Melissa Cole and Robert Gantt (I). (**I = incumbents**)

All have been invited to the forums, to be held at **6:30 p.m.** on the following dates:

- Thursday, **October 4**, Irmo Middle School
- Tuesday, **October 9**, Chapin Middle School
- Tuesday, **October 16**, Ballentine Elementary School

Questions may be submitted **in advance** to D5CandidatesForum2012@gmail.com. or **in writing** upon entry to each event. Candidates will not answer questions from the floor.

Moderators for two forums include news anchors **Ben Hoover** (WIS-TV) and **Darci Strickland** (WLTX); moderator for the third has yet to be confirmed.

● **First UN International Day of the Girl:** The U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution to observe the International Day of the Girl on **October 11, 2012** in NYC. The League, a member of the Working Group on Girls (a coalition of 80+ UN-affiliated NGOs) will sponsor events and invites LWV members who teach and work with girls to become involved via the first **VIRTUAL SUMMIT** (www.DayoftheGirlSummit.com) Our Toolkit shows you how to obtain proclamations, stage activities, win prizes, and become involved! For further information, please contact LWVUS UN Observer Rosalee Keech at unobserver@lww.org.

● The **Conservation Voters of South Carolina** and the SC Wildlife Federation are sponsoring a new initiative to educate the public on the role of the Public Service Commission (PSC). They will work with several partners on it. Their website will be live next week, and you will see information in the upcoming days about an “Energy Tour” of meetings across the state.

Penny for Transportation YARD SIGNS



Get your Yard Sign by....

- 1) going to our website greatermidlands.org and **click on the SIGN logo** at the top of the home page **OR**
- 2) e-mailing Tiffjames82@gmail.com with your **name, address, and phone number.**

A sign will be in your yard or your place of business within 5-7 days.

Lexington County Council

2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM
2nd Floor County Administration Building
212 South Lake Drive Lexington, SC 29072

For confirmation of meeting dates, please call 785-8103 or check website www.lex-co.com

Richland County Council

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM
2nd Floor County Administration Building
2020 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29202

For more information, please contact the Clerk of Council Office @ (803) 576-2061 or check:


www.richlandonline.com/departments/countycouncil/index.asp or www.rcgov.us

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ABSENTEE VOTING

To obtain a **mail-in-absentee ballot application**: You must show one of three **required** forms of ID, just as if you are at the polls.

- SC Voter Registration Card without picture,
- SC driver's license or
- SC picture ID.

You may call to obtain this application, but **have your SS number handy**, as you may be asked for it. Printed ballots are in and are being mailed out to absentee-by-mail voters.

Marked and *mailed* ballots  must be received
no later than midnight on November 6, 2012,

Marked and *hand delivered* ballots  must be received
by 5 pm on November 6, 2012.

To ensure the ballot is received and counted, it is best to mail the ballot as early as possible.



REMEMBER to have a **witness sign the envelope before mailing it**. Your ballot will **not be counted if the envelope does not have a signature**. Each absentee application is numbered and each ballot is numbered. ***If you apply to vote absentee, you may not cast your vote at your precinct. You must use the ballot you receive in the mail.***

People are still nervous and confused about the Voter ID law. According to the SC Attorney General, we can forget about it for the November 6, 2012 election.

IF the DC District Court rules for the state, Attorney General Wilson has publicly stated (*The State*, 9/23/2012, p. A10) that SC will not have the necessary time to implement the Voter ID law during this election cycle. **AG Wilson is the top law enforcement officer of the state and has the authority to issue this statement and to be believed. He has the final word for the state on matters of law.**

Carole Cato [Edited by *Sej Harman*]

