

League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area



LEAGUE LINES

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS

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Mark Your Calendar

» UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, December 14, Winter Social, Woodhill Estates Clubhouse, from 4-7. Bring friends and family, potential new members, children are welcome. This is an opportunity to spend time with your fellow League members and guests, and simultaneously get into the holiday spirit.

Please consider carpooling, and bring your favorite finger food, dessert or Christmas treat - or if you don't have time to bake or shop just bring yourself!

Beverages and sliced turkey and rolls will be provided by the League.

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Directions:

FROM TOWN: Go out Garner's Ferry Road to just past Woodhill Mall (on right). Turn right onto Pelham Drive (between Verizon and BB&T). Go to "Continue"

FROM I-77: Take Exit 9 toward Columbia, then go to Garner's Ferry Rd. to Woodhill Mall (on left). Turn left onto Pelham Drive.

CONTINUE on Pelham for about a mile and look for a sign on the right for Woodhill Estate/High Hampton. Turn right on Arborwood Rd. and go to the stop sign, then take a slight left. The driveway for the clubhouse is on the right. The clubhouse is a pale yellow 2 story colonial house. You may park in the lot on the left or in front of the house.

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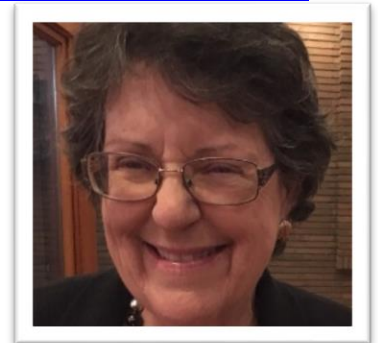
Thursday, January 16, Public Policy Luncheon, Program Planning, Lourie Center, Maxcy Gregg Park, 11:45-1:30. Help decide our local and national priorities for the upcoming League year. To reserve a lunch, contact Susan James, sc.susanbjames@gmail.com, before Tuesday, January 14, or bring your own.

Saturday, January 25, LWV/SC LEAD Day, Legislative Education and Advocacy Day, 9-3 at St. Peter's Catholic Church, 1529 Assembly Street, at Taylor Street in Columbia – LOTS of parking and easy handicap access. \$25.00 registration fee includes handouts, breakfast snack, lunch, and beverages. First-time attendees and new Columbia Area members are eligible for registration fee to be paid by LWV/Columbia Area. Information regarding **PRE-REGISTERING INFORMATION** will follow. Let Anne Maletic know if you are interested in the League paying your fee: anmaletic@gmail.com

Sunday, February 9, Symposium on the Community Impact of the LWV/Columbia Area on our 100th birthday, at the Robert Mills House, 2-3:30. Details to follow.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“Impeachment, Partisanship, and Leadership” – Issues arising from President Donald J. Trump’s July 25 telephone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky prompted a whistleblower to report possible abuse of power. Current headlines and assertions from many political pundits revolve around whether the whistleblower acted in a partisan way. A companion question would be, “Are there still motives in this country that are beyond partisan?”



As pertains to the Watergate scandal, did the Republican U.S. Senators act in a partisan way in 1974 when they told President Richard M. Nixon (a Republican) that he should resign for the good of the country? Although they were probably also concerned about the good of their political party, their actions could have been both for the good of the country and for the good of the Grand Ole Party (Republican). Whatever motives were in play, the key aspect of their actions at the end of the Nixon Administration was helpful and restorative to both the country and their party.

The elders of the Republican Party who advised Nixon to step down from office took a risk that they would be considered bad Republicans. Instead, they are usually seen today (and even in 1974) as leaders and statesmen (they were all men on this occasion). In the short run, the Republican Party suffered devastating loses in the November 1974 elections. In the long run, however, we see the results today.

We can instantaneously Google the facts of past impeachments. Understanding what the facts and circumstances mean in the short and long run, however, requires another step: wisdom. A fuller vision is part of wisdom.

Wisdom is bigger than public opinion polls, pithy sound bites, distractions, or the Machiavellian calculus of power and powerlessness. Wise counsel in the long run incorporates incalculable but heartfelt and known treasures. One religious text advises us, “Where there is no vision, the people perish.” First Nation people, Native Americans, ask that adults make decisions based on the repercussions, costs, and benefits out to the seventh generation.

Elections have consequences, of course. Nobody needs to tell this to members of the League. The consequential power of elections is why women and their allies fought for more than seventy years for suffrage. Women (and people of color, with the 1965 Voting Rights Act) wanted a stake in the consequences of elections.

Civil and human rights activists, and Suffragists, did not seek the right to vote for partisan reasons. They might have been partisan in their orientations, of course, but they knew more was at stake than partisan advantage. Indeed, some of the voting rights activists worried that expansion of suffrage might harm their personal political party. Nevertheless, they persisted.

Persistence was based on a second element at play – leadership. The knowledge that full citizenship was the life of a democracy propelled their work. Activists did not know if those whom their efforts would help were going to vote for one of the dominant political parties or vote at all. Their vision was larger – to give everyone the choice, for generations to come. The efforts were for the good of the country, to “make a more perfect union” as the founders put it.

The Constitution has consequences too. One mighty consequence is that no person is above the law. A second consequence is the weighty responsibility of elected officials to protect the United States “so help me God.” All elected officials swear by this oath to uphold the Constitution, which is distinct from protecting a political party or faction.

Upholding the Constitution requires wise leadership. Democracy is not a spectator sport. Ask your representatives to think of the common good during this turbulent time. Some representatives will respond that your request reflects your partisanship. Some representatives, perhaps, cannot rise above partisanship to see the larger point being made by their fellow citizens.

Please call, write, email, visit your elected officials, no matter their party, and ask them to think beyond partisanship. You can Google elected representatives in an instant. You can also go to VOTE411.org and consult LWV Directory of Public Officials brochures to identify officials and communicate with them. League volunteers created these citizen education tools for the common good and update the information as needed – and plan to do so beyond the seventh generation. The League’s mission is nonpartisan and seeks programs and procedures to make democracy work.

When citizens shift their focus to the common good, they will not be distracted by whether a whistleblower acted in a partisan manner, or not. The concern will instead be only whether elected officials acted in a partisan manner, or not. *Laura Woliver*



HIGHLIGHTS OF NOVEMBER GUN SAFETY PUBLIC POLICY LUNCHEON

Pam Craig

The topic for our Public Policy Luncheon might have been thought too depressing for the holidays, but it was exactly the right topic. Our speakers, Patty Tuttle of Moms Demand Action and Helen Pridgen of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), were both very informative.

Patty Tuttle, easily recognized in her red shirt as a member of Moms Demand Action, told us how the organization was started by Shannon Watts as part of her response to the Sandy Hook tragedy. Moms Demand Action is part of a larger organization - Everytown for Gun Safety. With the combined support of other organizations such as Mayors Against Illegal Guns, Students Demand Action, and Everytown Survivor Network, there are over six million supporters and organizations in every state.

Patty provided us with some stark facts: there are over 100 gun deaths every day, and two-thirds of those deaths are by suicide. Less than five percent of those who attempt suicide without a gun kill themselves; Blacks are ten times more likely to die by a gun; women in America, as victims of domestic violence, are twenty-one times more likely to be killed than other women in the world. Although there are more facts, these facts indicate the role guns have in the statistics. The goal of the organization is to keep families safe. It does so by concentrating on these issues: 1. Require background checks on all gun sales. 2. Close the loopholes. 3. Enact Red-Flag laws.

At a private gun sale, a background check of the buyer need not be performed. This happens often at gun shows and other types of open-air sales. This is considered a loophole because buyers who would not be able to pass a background check can go to a gun show to avoid that check. The other loophole issue is often called the "Charleston Loophole." In that situation, if a background check is not completed in three days, the sale goes through automatically. The Red-Flag laws passed by seventeen states allow family members to petition the courts to limit gun access to individuals with issues of concern. The organization has been supportive and successful, and a visit to their website will expose more information on many topics, debunking gun myths, and understanding their gun sense action network. <https://momsdemandaction.org/about/>

Helen Pridgen was also a host of information of the subject of suicide. One may wonder why these two would pair up, but two-thirds of the 100 gun deaths a day are by suicide. Even though our national rate of suicide has been increasing, the AFSP is working on an initiative, Project 2025, to reduce that fraction by 20%. Working with health care authorities, emergency responders, corrections, and firearms education groups, AFSP hopes to bring down the number of deaths by suicide. A step we all can take is a change in the language we use when talking about suicides. Instead of saying "committed suicide" – a pejorative term – consider "died by suicide," "ended life," or "killed themselves." Instead of "failed or successful suicide," consider the term "suicide attempt" or "death by suicide."

There is no single cause for suicide, but mental health issues can be a major factor. So, time and distance are two ways suicide deaths can possibly be reduced. Limiting access to guns might give a person a chance to rethink what they might be planning. Even simple things like placing locks on weapons or unloading ammunition also help.

Several handouts were provided and are available at: <https://afsp.org/>, <https://project2025.afsp.org/>.

A League leader asked how many in the group had been touched by suicide? There were a lot of hands raised. I also remember once reading that after the holidays the number of suicides increases. I am thinking maybe this was a very timely topic. The holidays are upon us – a look at these websites might make a difference.



OBSERVER CORPS UPDATE

Lady June Cole

11/14/2019 Richland County Voter Registration & Election Commission

Observer: Robin White

The State Board has informed the Commission that some of the required training has not been conducted. The Interim Director stated that issues of voting requirements had precluded time for the required training. A small staff for the number of requirements also contributes to the problem, especially due to new voting machine requirements. He indicated that he would try to work out the issues and coordinate with the State Board. Continuing issues concern disabled voters. One issue is disabilities allow “head of line” privilege. Continuing consideration of curbside voting issues will proceed. Some other issues have been raised concerning the privacy of votes on the new machines. Apparently, the voting machine face is such that a person may have the ability to see the voter ballot on an adjacent machine, as many polling machines are side-by-side. Board and staff indicated that resolving this would be a priority issue. Rather than paying an extremely high price for vendor-supplied shields, the Board considered ideas such as buying cardboard from a local vendor and having schools make shields as a project. The final decision was not made at this meeting.

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OTHER NEWS

ARE YOU THINKING OF PARTICIPATING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT? The following link is posted on the Richland County website – seeking residents who are interested in applying for open positions on a variety of boards and commissions. If you feel so moved, consider applying. (I served on one of these about a decade ago. It was very informative and productive to be part of the governmental process).... *Lynn Shirley*
http://www.richlandcountysc.gov/Portals/0/Departments/LegislativeDelegation/Docs/20191120_Press%20Release%20-BrdComm%202019.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1myULTiJnmVftzAkZOeRACG9QQichtm77Gp2EhF6ot_essGVoj0KaWPAc

Barbara Rackes shared similar volunteer information last month and will again in the future.

Elizabeth Jones Letter to the Editor on Gerrymandering 11/15/19:

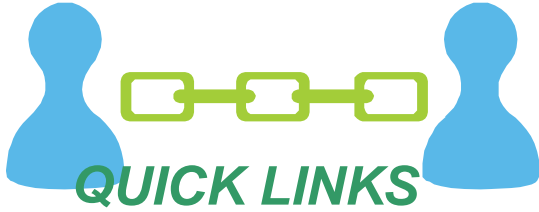
<https://www.thestate.com/opinion/article237249264.html>



**NOVEMBER PATH 2 REDEMPTION
EVENT AT BENEDICT COLLEGE –
MORE STUDENTS REGISTERED!**

SHAPE  **tomorrow**
REGISTER and VOTE

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Websites:

National: www.lwv.org/

State: <http://lwvsc.org/>

Columbia: www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Facebook: *To see our Facebook Page:*

1. Go to YOUR Facebook page and begin typing "**League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area**" in the search box until a list pops up.
2. Click on the name **League of Women Voters of Columbia, SC** with the familiar blue LWV Logo on the left.

That's it!

Twitter:

1. Go to YOUR Twitter account and search for the League of Women Voters Columbia Area and connect.

Facebook and Twitter email address:

[@LWVColumbiaSC](https://www.facebook.com/LWVColumbiaSC)

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Columbia City Council

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM City Hall 1737 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201

Check website at www.columbiasc.net for more information.



Lexington County Council

Meet: 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

Meet: 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) 576-2060 or check:

www.richlandonline.com

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