

Co-President's Message

Take a deep breath. Yes. Election Day 2024 is one year from now, November 5.

In preparation for what is expected to be a tumultuous election season and because South Carolina will host the early Democratic and Republican national primaries, LWVUS has launched a two-day training, learning, and



Pat Spurlock

mobilization event for Leagues in the southern states. LWVUS brought "Power the South" to Columbia Oct. 27 and 28. **Ruth Reed, Sandra Land, Janie Shipley, Reba Kruse**, and I were LWVOP's delegates. We had two full days of lectures, panel discussions, training, and activities to reinforce the lesson. Most of the sessions were led by LWVUS staff, as well as **Dr. Deborah Turner**, LWVUS President. Topics included:

- Analyzing challenges and threats facing voting rights and our democracy from a national and state perspective.
- Opportunities to build and flex our power going into 2024.
- Strengthening our People Power Movement
- Combatting Mis-, Dis-, and Mal-information
- Banned Books and Local Issues – Flexing our power at the local level for greater impact
- **Reba Kruse, LWVOP and Josh Malkin, ACLU SC**
- Power of Relational Organizing – Developing community coalitions
- Enfranchising Young People – mobilizing the youth vote
- **Ham Brooks, Generation Vote**

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voters of Oconee and Pickens Counties
 P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29631
www.lwvop.org

OFFICERS

Pat Spurlock, Co-President
 Holley Ulbrich, Co-President
 Sandra Land, VP Programming
 Allison Ranson, Secretary
 Elaine Laiewski, Treasurer

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 Kathy Bargeron
 Carolyn Bishop-McLeod
 Janet Marsh
 Sarah McNeill
 Ruth Reed
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 Linda Gahan
 Eleanor Hare
 Cheryl Lee
 Janie Shipley

Calendar of Events

November 7	Municipal Elections	Oconee & Pickens Counties
November 8	Advocacy 101	6 p.m., Little John Community Center
November 21	“SC Legislative Agenda”	7 p.m., Clemson Methodist
December 12	LWVOP Holiday Party	7 p.m., Clemson Downs, Corley Room

Clemson United Methodist Church, 300 Frontage Road, Clemson, (864-633-5242)

Co-President’s Message Continued

- League & Litigation – LWVUS Litigation Team supporting State and Local Leagues

LWVUS encourages state and local leagues to use the training and resources they have identified to prepare our members and, by extension, our communities for the 2024 elections and beyond. We will conduct workshops in addition to monthly meetings to identify our strengths and weaknesses; to develop opportunities to engage the larger community; to build coalitions such as CAFE, voter registration with NAACP, and our Medicaid expansion team.

It's going to be a busy year for our Voter Services Team and an unprecedented Election Season. As Bette Davis said in *All About Eve*, “Fasten your seatbelts, it’s going to be a bumpy night.”

Environmental Tip of the Month

Meeting virtually helps our planet! While we love to see people in person, it is better for the environment to meet virtually when possible. **Not** driving our cars will reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Other virtual benefits include saving time, wider participation, better work-life balance, and greater inclusion along with diversity of input.

Think green - think virtual!

Submitted by Ellie Taylor

Recap of the October Meeting: The Supreme Court

Actions by the Supreme Court, both Federal and State, are followed by several issue-oriented groups within LWVOP (women's reproductive rights; public education and censorship; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion). Earlier this year the LWVOP Book Club discussed *The Shadow Docket: How the Supreme Court Uses Stealth Rulings to Amass Power and Undermine the Republic* by **Stephen Vladeck**. Attendees proposed to widen the participation and continue the discussion with a program for Members and the public to address some of the issues raised during the Book Club discussion.

Chip Stapleton, a retired government relations consultant and former Chairperson of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) where he teaches classes on the Court, talked about the ups and downs of the Court with its decisions over the decades, as perceived by the public. Currently public opinion of the Court is low, in part, because several recent decisions are opposed by much of the population.

According to Mr. Stapleton, while the public may question its decisions, the Court's legitimacy is grounded in The Constitution and is inviolable. Only Congress or a Constitutional amendment can change the Court. He did predict that the Court would soon produce its own ethical code of conduct. Mr. Stapleton suggested one improvement to the Court could be a better process for deciding which cases to accept for adjudication each year, citing the length and complexity of the current selection system - 80 or so cases are adjudicated and around 100 are handled through the Emergency Docket. The balance of the 8,000 cases received each year are dealt with as non-merit cases whereby 4 of the 9 judges decide each case.

The Court's Emergency Docket, (aka the shadow docket) is used for judgments that are timely and relatively easy to decide, and when delay would be harmful. Stapleton stated it is an important component to the smooth functioning of the Court.

Highlights were presented of what the Justices will consider during the current term focusing on "cases that can change the lives of ordinary people" including:

- Gun rights/restrictions
- Congressional redistricting/ South Carolina's US House District 1
- Consumer Protection Finance Board funding
- Social media and free speech
- If taxes can be imposed on income not received
- Chevron doctrine, when Congress passes confusing legislation.

The Court term is October through June and verdicts for the selected cases are typically announced in late May or June. Attendees expressed their disagreement with Court decisions, specifically abortion, affirmative action, and gun rights. A lively discussion continued after the close of the program with attendees expressing an interest to learn more about the judicial system as well as to follow the court's actions with a better understanding of the process.

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Recap of the October Meeting Continued: The Supreme Court

As for next steps for LWVOP, there may be Calls for Action from LWVUS as the Court acts on cases that intersect with LWV positions and on a SCOTUS Code of Ethics. We also expect LWVSC action related to the case about South Carolina Congressional District 1. Any LWVOP Member with an interest in the judiciary and judicial reform should contact either **Holley Ulbrich** or **Pat Spurlock** to form an action team.

Submitted by Sandra Land

Chip Stapleton, a retired consultant and former chairperson of OLLI spoke to the LWVOP about the future challenges for the Supreme Court. Stapleton appears at right with League Co-President Holley Ulbrich.

For more information on State League activities, please see:

<https://my.lwv.org/south-carolina-state/events/calendar-league-women-voters-south-carolina-events>



All the election information you need is available now! Go to Vote411.org

The South Carolina Legislative Agenda: A Dialogue

The November 21 meeting will feature a panel of State Legislators serving Oconee and Pickens Counties about legislation-passed in 2023 and proposed for 2024.

- The three state legislators who have committed to come are:
State Senator Thomas Alexander, District 1
Pickens County Representatives Jerry Carter, District 3; and Neil Collins, District 5
- Oconee County **Representatives Bill Whitmire, District 1 and Bill Sandifer, District 2**, were invited but neither can attend.

We will get their take on the first legislative session of 2023-24 as well as their expectations and hopes for the second session which begins in January. This is a good opportunity to get acquainted with local legislators and share your hopes for what they are willing to do and what they are willing to refrain from doing, as well as learn about what they think are the most important issues facing our state. Those of you who attend the November 8 advocacy workshop will have an opportunity to practice your skills! A Zoom link will be sent to LWVOP Members later in November.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich and Sandra Land

What is SAFE?

The LWVOP Committee on Secure, Accessible and Fair Elections is aligned with the LWV core position of Electoral Democracy. LWVSC supports policies that ensure fair and open elections through unbiased and equitable redistricting, encouraging voter registration and access to voting, open primaries, and use of

voting equipment that ensures that voters can participate without any undue obstacle and produces election results that can be verified as accurately reflecting the intent of voters. SAFE came together under the leadership of **Janet Marsh** and **Shari Jung** in August of 2020 to address the unique concerns regarding the impending 2020 election. During the Fall of 2020, we strengthened established partnerships with the county election commissions and Directors in Oconee and Pickens Counties.

Voters in Pickens and Oconee Counties will have confidence in secure, accessible, and fair elections.

Our goals include following and acting on proposed election-related legislation on the state/national level and continuing our collaboration with local election offices. Here are a few ways that we carry out these goals:

- Attend County Election Commission Meetings,
- Lobby County Councils to support our Election Commissions requests for increased funding,
- Lobby our legislative delegations to support our election commission,
- Offer programs to better know and understand the important work of our Election Commissions; and monitor legislation related to voter processes,

Please contact **Carolyn Bishop-McLeod** if you would like to join the SAFE Team. Help is always needed with the above efforts.

New Member Bios



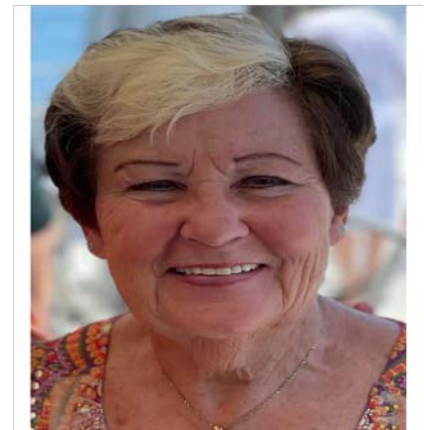
David Todd was born in Douglas County, Georgia in 1947. In 1969 he received a BS in Physics from North Georgia College in Dahlonega, Georgia. He spent the next twenty years in the US Army, Ordinance Corps. His tenure included stations in Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland; Sandia Base, New Mexico; Redstone Arsenal (RSA), Alabama; Herbornseelback, Germany; Nuremberg, Germany; Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois; and Kolsas, Norway.

Following his military tenure, he received a MS in Broad-field Science Education from West Georgia College in 1991. For the next twenty years he was a science teacher at R.S. Alexander Comprehensive High School in Douglas County Schools, Georgia. He retired in 2011 and in recent years moved to Walhalla. His interest is life-long learning and could spend all day at the library. Dave has three children, a stepchild, seven grandchildren and one more expected in 2024.

Bev Sevick was raised in Portland, Oregon and received her bachelor's in business and French from Montana State University. She and husband, **Tim** (her Mr. Wonderful), moved to Oregon, Illinois where they raised two sons while she worked as a paralegal and taught business and French at the local high school.

When the boys both graduated high school, Tim took a job in Iowa and Bev again worked as a paralegal before she pursued a master's in alternative education and began building a new alternative education program on the Winnebago Native American Reservation in Nebraska. After seven years, a final move was in store to Seneca where Bev volunteered at Collins Children's Home and started the Clemson Free Clinic before joining the staff at Clemson University's Dropout Prevention Center.

While there, she worked with the Native Americans in Southeast Alaska to improve education for Alaska's Native Americans. Since retirement in 2015, she has pursued her love of travel, enjoyed her three grandchildren, been an active member of her church, and joined the Guardian ad Litem program for Pickens County.



LWVOP Municipal Election Candidate Forums

Four successful municipal election forums were held in October. The LWVOP hosted two in Easley.

The Easley council race generated only fifteen people in the audience for six candidates and eight League members volunteered. The Easley Mayoral and Utility Commissioner races saw 50 audience members for four candidates and six volunteers. Central had the most candidates with nine, about forty-five in the audience and six volunteers. Walhalla was a media attraction as radio and newspaper were represented. There were about forty in the audience for five candidates and eight volunteers.

A planned event for Seneca was cancelled due to lack of candidate commitments to participate. The challenges this year included finding venues and connecting with candidates. In the end our purpose was met. We educated voters and hopefully more citizens will vote this year.

**Eight candidates for Central
Town Council sat for
questions during the LWVOP
Municipal Election Forum.**



Local Government Meeting Information

Clemson City Council
1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 p.m.
Pickens County Council
1st Monday, 6:30 p.m.
Pickens County School Board
4th Monday, 7:00 p.m.
Pickens County Library Board
Schedule on Pickens County
Website, Boards & Commissions

Seneca City Council
2nd Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Oconee County Council
1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Oconee County School Board
3rd Monday, 6:00 p.m.
Oconee County Library Board
Schedule on Oconee County
Website, Boards & Commissions

Confirm dates, time, and agenda on their websites.



LWVUS brought “Power the South” to Columbia Oct. 27 and 28. Featured with Dr. Deborah Turner, President of LWVUS (center) are LWVOP attendees. From left to right are Janie Shipley, Pat Spurlock, Ruth Reed (center rear), Reba Kruse, and Sandra Land.