

## Message from the Co-President



We all know that League members tend to be very busy people. And we also know that it is busy people who get things done. If I asked each of you to consider

*If I could do one thing to help make democracy work*

*WHAT WOULD YOU DO?*

Here are some ideas:

- ACT on the next Action Alert that comes from LWVUS or LWVSC, requesting you to contact the President, or our Senators or State Representatives, stating your position and encouraging their support
- Write a letter to the editor to raise awareness about an issue of concern to you and the League
- Accept nomination/appointment to the League board or committee or participating in a League project
- Advocate for voter rights or participate in a voter registration drive

Whatever you choose to do, let Sandra or me know if we can assist in your effort. With each member doing one thing, together we can accomplish much.

Regards,

*Janie Shipley*

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## THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area  
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633  
[www.lwvclemsonarea.org](http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org)

Sandra Gray, Co-President  
Janie Shipley, Co-President  
Holley Ulbrich, VP/Program & Action  
Diana Stafford, Secretary  
Bill Hare, Treasurer

### ELECTED DIRECTORS:

Eleanor Hare, Webmaster  
Cheryl Lee  
Ellen Magee  
Mary Ann McKenzie, Co-Chair P & A  
Nicole Paluzzi  
Mike Stafford, Chair Finance/Fundraising

### APPOINTED DIRECTORS:

Paula Appling, VOTER Editor  
Elaine Epstein, Voter Service Anderson Co  
Elaine Laiewski, Nominating Comm Chair  
Elinor Baron, VOTER Mailing

Photo Credits: Eleanor Hare, Mike Stafford

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tues, Mar 10      **BOARD MEETING**, Clemson City Hall Community Room, 5 p.m.
- Tues, Mar 17      **GENERAL MEETING**, Are Corporations People?, OLLI, 7 p.m.
- Tues, April 21    **GENERAL MEETING**, Update on the Affordable Care Act, OLLI, 7 p.m.
- April 25-26      **STATE LEAGUE CONVENTION** in Hilton Head
- Tues. May 5      **ANNUAL MEETING**, Collins Old Town, social time at 6 p.m., dinner at 6:30 p.m.

**Refer to [lwvclemsonarea.org](http://lwvclemsonarea.org) for updates and current information**

### Coming in March: Are Corporations People?

Are corporations people? For more than a century corporations have fought to be legally recognized as people, with all the rights (but not necessarily the obligations) of natural born persons, including free speech and the free exercise of religion. (Bet they wouldn't want to be drafted if we brought back the draft. Nor would they be willing to give up their limited liability and unlimited lifetime, neither of which apply to us average folks.) Two recent Supreme Court decisions, Citizens United and Hobby Lobby, have crossed that line. Citizens United claimed that corporations had the same free speech rights as people, and Hobby Lobby allowed a closely held corporation to opt out of providing employees certain kinds of contraception coverage on religious grounds. These two decisions have far reaching implications, especially for two positions that the League has long supported: reproductive choice, and limits on the influence of money on political campaigns. League board member and Seneca Attorney Nicole Paluzzi will explore the implications of corporate personhood for these two issues and others at the March 17th meeting of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area.

*Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

Heartfelt condolences to Sandra Gray and her family on the loss of her 26 year old son, Michael.

[www.brownglesbyfuneralhome.com](http://www.brownglesbyfuneralhome.com)

### LEAD Speaker: Mike Shealy

Mike Shealy, Budget Director for the SC Finance Committee, spoke to League Education and Advocacy Day on January 31<sup>st</sup>. He gave us an excellent rundown on the budgeting issues for the current year and the longer-term problems facing legislators.

Top issues are transportation funding, education funding, expanding preschool opportunities in poor districts, the Local Government Fund, the Medicaid match, funding DSS caseworker expansion, and the cost of mental health services for inmates. The debate over transportation funding is particularly intense, whether to raise the gas tax, phase out the sales tax cap on cars, or use general revenue. The big three —public education, higher education, and health care/social services are currently account for 82 percent of General Fund appropriations, leaving little for all the rest of the claimants. The changing shape of the economy—the growth of the elderly population, the decline in labor force participation and wages as a share of income, and global competition—has affected the stream of revenue to the General Fund and will for the foreseeable future.

These trends are not unique to South Carolina. We can expect further pressure on transfer programs—TANF, Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security. Changes in the Nordic countries and Sweden in particular suggest that there are ways to reduce the size and scope of state provision of services while still maintaining services. If you would like a copy of his powerpoint, email

[MikeShealy@scsenate.gov](mailto:MikeShealy@scsenate.gov).

*Submitted by Holley Ulbrich*

## February Recap: Where Are All These People Coming From?

David Dreher, a 25-year veteran of the US foreign service in countries from Bolivia to Bangladesh presented an update on immigration policy.

One million immigrants currently come to the US each year, more than to any other country; however, Canada and Australia allow more immigrants per capita than the USA. From 1840 to 1860 most of the immigrants came from Ireland and Germany whereas 1880-1914 saw immigration from Eastern and Southern Europe. The Quota System was established in 1920 leading to a sharp reduction in immigration. This ended in 1965 with the family reunification policy, increasing immigration from previously under-represented nations. The Immigration Reform Control Act of 1986 brought amnesty for those who were in the US illegally, employee sanctions, the visa waiver program and temporary agricultural workers. In 2012 by executive order, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) granted children brought to this country with parents legal status. In 2014 an executive order expanded DACA to Parents of American and Lawful Permanent Residents. In 2013 US Senate passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill (S.744) but it died in the US House.

The tourist visa to the US prior to 1993 could be obtained by filing out an application form, submitting to a 3 to 5 minute interview with a Commissioned Consular Officer (CCO) overseas, and having a security check to establish name, place of birth and no deportations. There was no fee for the visa. After the 1993 bombing of the basement of the World Trade Center, new rules were set in place. Machine readable Visa were required, a fee currently \$160 must be paid, interviews with CCO were extended and applicants were turned down if they were not expected to return to their home country or were a terrorist, had a police record or were involved in genocide.

Forty percent of the illegals in this country came with a Visa or on a Visa Waiver Program but have overstayed. 100,000 Irish and 50,000 Germans are illegal. Those wishing asylum must demonstrate they cannot return home based on a well-founded fear of persecution on protected grounds, i.e. race, nationality, religion, political opinion, membership in a social group, etc. The request must be made from the US soil. 120,000 refugees are granted asylum each year.

Four suggested reforms of the immigration process include exit procedures for all travelers, phase out of family reunification, institution of point system for immigrants based on language skills, education, working skills etc., and national ID card.

*Submitted by Linda Gahan*

## Bill Steirer 1936-2015



Bill Steirer, long time Clemson League member and husband of Ada Lou Steirer, a charter member and past president of the Clemson League, died on February 5th after a lengthy illness. Bill received his Ph.D. in history from the University of Pennsylvania and taught at Clemson University for 40 years. His particular interests and popular classes included early American colonial history, South Carolina and Southern history, and Black history. He was named an Alumni Master Teacher in 2000, served as president of the Faculty Senate, and was faculty advisor to the Student League for Black Identity. Bill was active in community service at University Lutheran Church and in the South Carolina Synod mentoring candidates for ministry. He also served on the South Carolina Humanities Council, the Pickens County Library Board, the Pendleton District Historical and Recreational Commission, and the YMCA Board. We extend our sympathy to Ada Lou and to their children Mark and Kristen.

## LEAD Speaker Kyle Michel, Esq. on Effective Lobbying

Kyle G. Michel, Esq., suggested several ways to lobby effectively for League positions:

- At the Statehouse, go to the lobby to see members instead of the gallery. The lobby is where the action takes place.
- Sometimes just a few peoples' urgings can influence a legislator who has not decided how to vote.
- A personal, hand-written letter is more effective than email. But, if you do send email, use the subject line "constituent."
- When you see your representative, introduce yourself as a constituent and make a favorable comment about something he or she has accomplished. After 4 times, you will be remembered.
- Legislators want to know how a divergent population (young/old, male/female, black/white) view issues.

Mr. Michel singled out Senator Larry Martin for his work on ethics legislation and urged League members from his area to contact him in support of his efforts.

*Submitted by Elizabeth Adams and Eleanor Hare*

## GUEST EDITORIAL: Supporting Additional Funding for Pickens County Schools

When busy parents of school-age children spend their time in the audience at lengthy, late-night school board meetings, something important must be going on. There is. These parents and teachers are making a concerted effort to reform the way Pickens County Schools Trustees fund our schools. While one parent stays home to drive carpool, serve dinner, finish homework, and do bedtime routines, the other heads out to the Sidden Administrative Building, home of the Pickens County School Board. And what is waiting for us there, unfortunately, is deadlock between three pro-schools trustees and three anti-tax trustees. The anti-tax officials are former board chairman Alex Saitta (Pickens) and newly elected board members Phillip Bowers (Central/Six Mile) and Henry Wilson (Dacusville/Easley).

The School District of Pickens County is at a tipping point, so we, as parents, are trying our best to educate other busy parents and supporters of public education about the current crisis: Technology is failing or is nonexistent in our schools, and **zero** dollars have been set aside in any budget to correct the problem. Teacher salaries are lagging not by one step, but are **two steps** behind the rest of the Upstate. A teacher with a Bachelor's degree and five years of experience in Oconee County can earn as much as a teacher with a Master's degree and five years of experience in Pickens County. It comes as little surprise that teachers are leaving for better paying teaching jobs outside the district.

The questions Pickens County Schools' trustees are asking right now include, "How do we pay for our schools? How do we correct teacher and support staff salaries? Address rising health insurance costs? Replace outdated computers? Pay for classroom supplies?" For more than a decade, these questions have not been *answered*, but rather, *avoided* with the shifting around of monies, the leveraging of one-time windfalls, and small increases in state appropriations.

Some school board members and anti-tax proponents are trying to divert the onus of this responsibility to the state. **But as education advocates, we know that the only real answer is to continue advocating for state funds while also securing local dollars through a modest, recurring increase in property taxes.** This is also the plan recommended by school superintendent Danny Merck.

Our grassroots efforts seek to educate and embolden the busy, bi-partisan, pro-schools base in Pickens County, and we hope to override the vocal anti-tax movement that is ever-present before the school board. We know there are more people who are pro-schools than anti-tax; we just need to be seen and heard.

As parents, we encourage the League of Women Voters' continued support and presence in our fight to secure adequate local funding for public education – by writing school board members, penning letters to the editor in our local newspapers, and by being a supportive presence during upcoming school board meetings. Trustees will be deliberating our district's budgets in March, April and May, and their regular monthly meetings offer an opportunity for public comment.

You are busy. We are busy. But by working together we can show schools trustees that more people support schools than the status quo. Make time in the coming months to lend your support to this important cause: the education and the future of Pickens County's children.

Heidi Williams, Central mom of two, S.T.A.N.D. (Supporting Teachers And the Needs of our District)

Robin Miller, Easley mom of two, CCPC (Concerned Citizens for Pickens County)

*The LWVCA has a position supporting additional funding for Pickens County schools, including higher taxes if necessary, but that does not mean we endorse every opinion expressed in this Op-Ed.*

### LWVSC Convention 2015

LWVSC's biennial convention is April 25-26 in South Carolina's vacation destination Hilton Head! LWVSC officers and directors will be elected, our program of study and action will be adopted and the 2015-16 fiscal year budget will be approved. Speakers include Superintendent of Education Molly Mitchell Spearman, Director of the Clemson Cyber-institute Dr. Vernon Burton, and Coastal Climate Extension Specialist Dr. Elizabeth Fly. What a wonderful opportunity for new members, emerging leaders and old-timers to get together and make democracy work in South Carolina! For more information and registration details: [www.lwvsc.org/2015lwvsconvention.html](http://www.lwvsc.org/2015lwvsconvention.html). Volunteer to be one of LWVCA's official delegates!

Many thanks to everyone who participated in our FUNdraising wine-tasting! Total income from multiple fundraisers is \$2,688, only \$141 shy of our year-end goal. Without these efforts, our League would not have sufficient funds to publish the VOTER or send delegates to State meetings. Congratulations to all who have worked so hard in this fiscal year's fund raising activities!

**Annual Meeting: May 5  
Policies for the Future of Food  
Presentation by Walker Miller**

The nexus of climate change, ecosystem destruction, soil depletion, water scarcity, increasing availability of cheap fossil fuels and population growth reads like a recipe for famine, social disruption (banditry, wars and terrorism) and plagues. As the nexus progresses over the next few decades local low carbon input producers of food and goods will be advantaged as transport intensive and high carbon-energy input enterprises are disadvantaged. There will be a decline in the service economy as a larger share of the population is involved in production. Will we have the cultural capacity to cope with the change? The difficulty is that cheap energy know-how has atrophied. Will the 2030 toolbox be able to hybridize the new with the old approaches to farming? The question is how do we get there from here? The alternative of ecocide, the end of humanity, "The Sixth Extinction" as suggest by Elizabeth Kolbert is just not acceptable..."It changes everything!" says Naomi Klien (two suggested readings).\*

Walker Miller, farmer, The Happy Berry in Six Mile and retired professor from Clemson University will discuss aspects of the nexus above. His areas of training are Plant pathology, Physiology, Nematology, Entomology, Bacteriology and Mycology and have focused on regenerative agriculture since the early 1980's. His career was in research and extension. He was past president of FOLKS a watershed management group and served on the board of directors of several farm related civic organizations and his family recently received "The Farmer of The Year Award" for 2014-15 From Carolina Farm Stewardship Association.

\*[www.amazon.com/The-Sixth-Extinction-Unnatural-History/dp/0805092994](http://www.amazon.com/The-Sixth-Extinction-Unnatural-History/dp/0805092994)  
[www.amazon.com/This-Changes-Everything-Capitalism-Climate/dp/1451697384/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?s=books](http://www.amazon.com/This-Changes-Everything-Capitalism-Climate/dp/1451697384/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1424631652&sr=1-)

**Call for Nominations!**

The LWVCA Nominating Committee is looking for candidates for Co-President and 3 elected Board members. Terms are all two years, beginning in June.

If you have questions or would like to be considered for one of these positions, please contact Elaine Laiewski at [lski139@gmail.com](mailto:lski139@gmail.com).

Support the League in its endeavors to encourage good government, support transparency, and be ethically minded.

**LWVCA Proposed 2015-16 Budget**

Income	2014-15	2015-16
Dues	\$3,840	\$3,630.00
Member contributions	\$300	500.00
ED Fund contrib	\$800	650.00
Fundraising	\$1,479	1,450.00
wine tasting		
Non-member contributions	\$250	250.00
*Annual Meeting	\$1,000	1,000.00
DPO Publ. Off-budget fund	\$300	300.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$7,669</b>	<b>7,780.00</b>
Expenses		
PMP-US (\$31/person)**	\$1,953	1,875.00
PMP-SC (\$14/person)**	\$960	847.00
Voter		
Printing	\$550	650.00
Mailing	\$400	400.00
Website	\$225	225.00
Convention	\$2,000	2,000.00
Board Tools:		
Program/Action	(Not listed)	50.00
President	\$100	100.00
Membership	\$100	100.00
Voter Ed/Services	\$100	50.00
DPO Publications	\$300	300.00
Fundraising	\$100	100.00
Misc	\$131	33.00
Citizenship Award	\$50	50.00
*Annual Meeting	\$1,000	1,000.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$7,669</b>	<b>\$7,780.00</b>

\*\*Per Member Payment

Clemson City Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7:30 pm.  
 Seneca City Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 6:00 pm.  
 Pickens County Council 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</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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