



THE VOTER

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Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Message from the President

I recently spent some time in Canada and am always interested in differences, which can be very real, and commonalities between the two countries. Reading the local newspapers one finds a lot of US news, and it is not hard to understand why they know so much more about us than we know about them.



My husband and I had a first-hand look at the civic process in Canada with an invitation to attend a zoning hearing. A developer wanted a plot of land rezoned in order to expand a golf course and invited local residents to this hearing. The discussion was a great example of civil discourse where the developer seriously listened to the neighbor's concerns about the potential of the land being used years down the road as a campground or trailer park. The most outspoken, passionate opponent was also the most soft-spoken person in the room.

Within hours of arrival, I was asked by a Canadian neighbor what I think about a certain candidate who is running for US President. He was compared to a former mayor of Canada's largest city who routinely defied convention in his speech and behavior. The next comment I received, related to the length of our campaign season compared to the very short Canadian campaign of 78 days. The new Prime Minister, head of their Parliamentary government, is Justin Trudeau who has been in office for 100 days; his 78-day campaign ended with his party's defeat of the incumbent Stephen Harper. Trudeau is being given much acclaim over having named HALF of his cabinet as women. During his campaign, he proposed to accept 25,000 refugees from Iraq and Syria. There were several news articles about Ontario cities and towns conducting community-wide campaigns to raise the C\$28K required by federal government to host a refugee family of four. Other hot-button issues that Trudeau is addressing include the increase in opioid abuse/deaths - a 463% increase in opioid-related deaths in Ontario between 2000 and 2013. Much attention is being given to discrimination against First Nations groups. The

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message	1
Calendar of Events	2
February in Review	2
March General Meeting: Status of Women in South Carolina	2
Wine Tasting Fundraiser	2
Review: Program Planning/Consensus Meetings	3
Help Wanted: Voter Editor	3
Welcome New Members	4
Sarah Leverette's Wise Words	4
What's Going on at The Statehouse?	4
Save the Dates	4
Update on Voter Registration Efforts	5
More on Criminal Justice in SC	6
Observer Corps Reports	7
Observer Corp Schedule	8

THE VOTER

League of Women Voters Clemson Area
P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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Photo Credits: Eleanor Hare, Ken Marsh

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tues, Mar 1 **BOARD MEETING**, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, Clemson, 5:30 pm
 Tues, Mar 15 **MARCH GENERAL MEETING: Status of Women in South Carolina**, OLLI, 7:15
 Sat, Mar 19 **Wine Tasting Fundraiser**, 5 p.m.-7p.m., Circa 1930 on Ram Cat Alley, Seneca
 Tues, May 10 **ANNUAL MEETING**, Occasions, Central, SC

Refer to lwvclemsonarea.org for updates and current information

February's Meeting in Review: Criminal Justice

February's General meeting centered on Criminal Justice. In a TED talk, Bryan Stevenson, a black Harvard-educated lawyer, shared his experiences of working with poor and often wrongly convicted prisoners in the South.

Imagine viewing the world through these truths: in 40 years (1972 to 2012), the population of prisons and jails jumped from 300,000 to 2.3 million. The U.S. has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. In poor communities and communities of color, 1 of every 3 black men between the ages of 18-30 are in jail,

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March Meeting: Status of Women in SC

This month our meeting will focus on the status of women in SC – where are we going, where have we been, where do we need to go. The program will examine pending legislation affecting women, especially regarding the problem of human trafficking in South Carolina.

Finally, we will update the status of the Protection and Advocacy for People with Disabilities Act. Is it being effectively administered?

Presenters will be Mary Ann McKenzie and Deborah Cantrell, a former counselor at Clemson University and at the Greenville Women's Shelter.

Submitted by Mary Ann McKenzie

Wine Tasting Fundraiser

NOTE CHANGE OF DATE TO MARCH 19

An Evening in Venice will feature the robust flavor profile from the Veneto Region of Italy in a flight of wines curated by Level II Certified International Sommelier Eva Hirschmann Frye of Table 301 Restaurant Group in Greenville. Ms. Frye has designed a wine flight for our event that will pair wine with meats and cheeses to best complement the character of both and will share notes on each label and vintage. This year we hope to focus on the social enjoyment of wine and to learn the viniculture and viticulture that produces the wines we will share. The event is scheduled to take place from five until seven o'clock in the evening at Circa 1930 on Ram Cat Alley in Seneca on March 19, 2016. Tickets are \$30.00 each or 4 tickets for \$100. Please contact Bill Hare at wrhare@earthlink.net to reserve a space.

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Canadian Human Rights Tribunal recently ruled that the government has discriminated against indigenous children. Almost half of Canadian children in foster care are aboriginal, even though indigenous people make up less than five per cent of the population. And then, there is the Zika virus which was covered in the newspaper every day for the two weeks we were there.

Do these observations from north of the border sound familiar...Syrian refugees, abuse of legal/illegal substances, discrimination of minorities, infectious disease outbreaks? Canadians watch U.S. politics very closely. With few exceptions, the Canadians we know do not reveal their biases related to American political contests, but they are aware of our candidates' positions and they know that the outcome of U.S. elections will affect the future of Canada.

Janie Shipley

Review of Program Planning/Consensus Meetings

Our combined money and politics consensus and program planning meeting was snowed out on January 23rd, so we regrouped. With a February 1st deadline, we did the consensus on Monday late afternoon February 1st with six people participating in person and two who sent in their responses. It was a lively and thoughtful discussion. We remain frustrated that the consensus is prepared and announced by the national board rather than waiting a couple of months to discuss and ratify it at the convention, which is a more democratic process. But we participate anyway, because it's the only game in town.

The program planning meeting drew 13 members, including some new members. We gathered at Ye Olde Sandwiche Shoppe in Seneca, our favorite spot for this annual event, and discussed the proposed national focus on making democracy work in some detail. There was a lot of enthusiasm for this idea in the light of the current primary campaigns and experiences in South Carolina. We also endorsed a couple of proposals from Leagues in Colorado and Tacoma, Washington, affirmed our two existing local positions, and gave some guidance to the Program and Action Team about meetings to plan for next year.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich



At the Program Planning meeting (l-r): Linda Gahan, Cheryl Lee, Reggie Turetzky, Patty Warner, Lou Koppel, Joan Koppel, Holley Ulbrich, Catherine Watt, Paula Appling, Ellie Taylor, Dianne Haselton, Janet Marsh. Empty chair filled by Ken Marsh, photographer.

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prison, or on probation or parole. That percentage increases to 50-60% in urban communities. Imagine *knowing* that being rich and guilty gets treated better than poor and innocent. A person is 11 times more likely to get the death penalty if the victim is white and 22 times more likely to get the death penalty if the defendant is black and the victim is white. In Alabama, 34% of the black male population has been permanently disenfranchised. The U.S. is the only country in the world with 13-year-olds on death row.

Stevenson ended his talk with some food for thought: Ultimately, you will judge the character of a society by how the poor, the condemned and the incarcerated are treated.

Access Stevenson's talk at www.ted.com/talks/bryan_stevenson_we_need_to_talk_about_an_injustice?language=en and check out his book: www.amazon.com/Just-Mercy-Story-Justice-Redemption/dp/081298496X

Submitted by Paula Appling

Help Wanted

LWVCA seeks editor for foremost political, nonpartisan Clemson-area newsletter. Published only 8 times/year. No writing skills necessary. Working knowledge of MS Word a plus. Will train. For more information, contact Eleanor Hare (wm@clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org) or Paula Appling (newsletter-editor@clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org).



At the LEAD Conference (l-r): Dan Warner, Carol Ward and Patty Warner

Welcome New Members!

Ted Taylor

Ted Taylor is an Emeritus Professor in Materials Science and Engineering at Clemson University. He is an environmental activist serving on watershed and Sierra Club boards among other contributions. His current hobby is using his professional interest in ceramics and his creative instincts to create pottery through the Clemson Arts Center and Clemson University Art Department. Ted is married to LWV member Ellie Taylor and has three amazing kids plus six wonderful grandchildren. He is also an avid bicyclist and disc golf aficionado.

B.R. Skelton

BR Skelton is a lifelong resident of the area. He grew up in Clemson and attended Calhoun-Clemson High School. He graduated from Clemson University with a BS and MS. He received his PhD in Economics from Duke. He taught Economics at Clemson for 26 years. He has been actively involved in community and political issues for the past 50 years. From 2002-2014 he served as the Clemson area Representative in the SC House. He has been married to his wife, (also a League member) Vickie, for 25 years.

What's going on at the Statehouse?

Worth repeating from *LWVSC Voter*: Lynn Teague, the League's registered lobbyist, is offering a monthly legislative update for all League members interested in the latest happenings at the SC Statehouse. Monthly legislative update calls will be the first Thursday of March, April, May, and June at 3:30 pm. The Conference Call number is 605-475-3235 and the PIN is 867392#. If you want to prepare for the call, check out [Lynn's LEAD presentation](#) for a great explanation of how LWVSC approaches our core issues and works with coalitions to stay on top of issues in our [state program and positions](#).

Sarah Leverette's Wise Words

Please enjoy and take to heart the following wise words from Sarah Leverette collected at the recent LEAD conference in Columbia. Sarah, the first woman lawyer in South Carolina, has been a League member in good standing for 65+ years. "The League of Women Voters is a group of high-minded ladies in low-heeled shoes.

"We don't say so, 'til we know so.

"Change is inevitable; our response to change determines our future.

"I may be preaching to the choir, but remember that the choir leads and sings to the congregation.

"The League's outreach should not stop at the computer screen; the phone is fine, but face-to-face, you will know their response.

"Pick up your gun, load it with League material and go out and shoot.

"The League is not the president or the national board or even the state board. The League is YOU.

"Do what you can to spread the League message. Be informed. The positions are not rocket science."

Compiled by Elizabeth Adams



Sarah Leverette (l) and JoAnn Day

Mark Your Calendar!

Tuesday, May 10 – Annual Meeting to be held at Occasions in Central. Our program, **The South Carolina Energy Innovation Center: Building a World Class Facility for Wind and Solar Research** will be presented by Dr. Imtiaz Haque and will focus on the path of events and progress that turned an abandoned Navy warehouse into a unique energy laboratory that houses the world's largest wind turbine drivetrain testing facility in the world.

Submitted by Ellie Taylor

Update from Cheryl Lee on Voter Registration Efforts

If you register them, they just might vote . . .

This has been a most successful voter registration drive. In all we have had over 29 League members or friends of the League volunteer and we have registered, either on paper or online, 726 students and adults. We have contacted and worked in every school in Oconee and Pickens County. We have also worked at T L Hannah and Pendleton High School in Anderson County. In addition, this year we have worked at Southern Wesleyan University, all three Tri-County Technical College campuses, and Clemson University.

This effort began last fall around National Voter Registration Day, September 22, 2015. This report is up to date for our recent registrations that take advantage of the interesting Presidential Preferential Primary allowing students, still 17, to vote in this primary if they will turn 18 on or before November 8, 2016.

Let us celebrate the members and friends of the LWVCA who made this possible. In no particular order they are: Linda Gahan, Lyn Norton, Kathy Clark, Sandra Gray, Elizabeth Adams, Reggie Turetzky, Patty Warner, Carol Kozma, Paulette Keffas-Chassin, Diane Stafford, Mike Stafford, Vickie Skelton, Bill Hare, Mary Beverly Haque, Mary Ann McKenzie, Pat Martin, Betty Rosier, Aleta Robinson, Sarah McNeill, Frances Plotnik, Ed Rock, Dianne Haselton, Arlene Stewart, Holley Ulbrich, Carol Ward, Rosellen Aleguire, Paula Appling, Elinor Baron, Ansley Fraser, and many students. Many of these dedicated volunteers worked at several venues.

Looking forward, our League is already signed up as a partner with the LWVUS for our 2016 National Voter Registration Day, September 27. This partnership provides stickers, a program guide, and other materials. In addition, there are helpful hints in approaching high school students and appealing to their patriotic side. Also, there is a central reporting system that keeps account of our numbers and advertises this information.

One of the most exciting developments is the ability for anyone with a driver's license and a smart phone to register by scanning our Online Voter Registration Page. These bar code cards are being widely distributed by our League and allow holders to register to vote, update their registration, preview their ballot and request an absentee ballot. At T L Hannah, for example, students registered in less than 2 minutes with their smart phones. West-Oak reserved the computer lab for us for two days and we were able to talk to the students and encourage them to show up at the polls. Hopefully, we can do this at all schools this fall. This procedure simplifies the registration process and no one sees the student's personal information.

Hopefully, we will have dates in August for you to sign up to help with this most critical job of our League. In addition to the schools and universities listed above, my goal is to reach Anderson University and more schools in Anderson County.



More Information on Criminal Justice System in South Carolina

At our February General meeting, about the workings of the criminal justice system in the South (mainly Alabama), questions were raised about South Carolina. We did report on the court case on treatment of mentally ill prisoners that was decided against the state in 2014, and we promised an update. This information appeared in the February 20th issue of Statehouse Report (www.statehousereport.com/2016/02/19/news-state-spending-more-on-prisons-less-on-colleges/)

In the 2004-05 fiscal year, the state allotted \$362 million in General Fund dollars for prisons, which included the Departments of Corrections and the agencies that deals with juveniles, probation and parole, according to state documents. But in the current fiscal year budget, that amount has grown to \$507 million. That's a nearly 40 percent increase in a little over a decade, even as the inmate population dropped by 2,000, or about 10 percent, between 2005 and 2015, according to Department of Corrections numbers.

Senate Corrections and Penology Committee Chair Mike Fair (R-Greenville)...[said that] the state was currently spending more on its prisons system, in part, due to a lawsuit, which has led to the hiring of 40 medical and mental health professionals. Fair praised the current Corrections administration, saying, "gone are the days of deficit spending" under the administration of Gov. Mark Sanford.

But Fair said more funding was needed in prisons to make facilities safer. He pointed to one facility, which has 120 men stored overnight in a dormitory and has only a single female guard at night. To keep costs down, Fair said South Carolina was in step with the rest of the nation, which is looking more to a wider variety of punishments than just incarceration. Giving judges more "tools" with which to deal with offenders, especially younger and non-violent ones, can turn lives around and save taxpayers serious money, said Fair. One of his favorite examples is a work camp in Beaufort where younger offenders are diverted into a program that teaches them how to weld in a relatively short amount of time and emerge with skills that can be marketed to acquire a \$20-an-hour job.

More cost-savings could be realized if the state put more money into parole and probation programs, said state Sen. Gerald Malloy (D-Darlington), standing in the Statehouse next to Bryan Stirling, the executive director of the Department of Corrections. Stirling said that, thanks to relatively new alternative sentencing programs ushered in by an omnibus sentencing reform bill that Malloy helped push through a few years ago, his agency was able to close "three and a half prisons" and reap cost savings. Malloy credited Stirling with reducing the state's prison populations by close to 5,000 inmates in recent years.

Submitted by HolleyUlbrich

Observer Corps Reports

Pickens County Council – February 1, 2016

The Council attempted to address citizen concern that out-of-state coal ash may be headed to a landfill near Liberty.

Submitted by Bill and Eleanor Hare

Oconee County Legislative Delegation – February 11, 2016

About 30 people attended the Oconee County Legislative Delegation meeting on Feb. 11. Senator Alexander, Rep. Sandifer and Rep. Whitmire listened to 5 speakers, including Reggie Turetzky, Rosellen Aleguire, Ben Turetzky and Eleanor Hare. League members Patty Warner and Dan Warner also attended.

Submitted by Bill Hare

Clemson City Council 1st and 3rd Monday, 6:30 pm
 Seneca City Council 2nd Tuesday, 6:00 pm
 Pickens County Council 1st Monday, 6:30 pm
 Oconee County Council 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm

Anderson County Council 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 6:00 pm
 Pickens County School Board 4th Monday, 7:00 pm
 Oconee County School Board 3rd Monday, 6:00 pm
 Anderson Co. School Board 3rd 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 and contact us at lwvclemson@gmail.com.

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P. O. Box 802

Clemson, SC 29633