

## President's Message

May 2007

This is my last president's message. I have finished my last major task, a year of filing! Going through the files made me realize the things we did well in the last year—the forum on public prayer, the Kilowatt Ours tour (thanks to Steve Johnson and Joe Whetstone), the broad coverage of voter service (thanks to Reggie and her team), the meeting with legislators, the holiday party, program planning, two consensus meetings on electronic voting and adult education, our first ever book discussion, and the cool cities program. We sent Janie Shipley to national convention and many delegates to statewide meetings. Eleanor Hare got our very fine web site up and running, and we had a successful fund-raising year with contributions from the community, two “niche” yard sales and two wine tastings. The VOTER got a new look with lots of pictures, we distributed more than 1,300 Directories of Public Officials in three counties, and we wound up the year with a fun annual meeting that was held for the first time in Oconee County.

I want to thank the board for a good and very collaborative year. We didn't accomplish all our ambitious goals, but we accomplished most of them, and are handing some on to the new board, particularly more action and better publicity. I know that Janie Shipley will provide the League with excellent leadership in the year to come. I am looking forward to continuing to serve on the board in the new role of Vice-President for Program and Action.

I ran into our state representative, B.R. Skelton, at the Post Office recently. B.R. says that the League does good work, and is underappreciated and undervalued. Let's keep up the good work and make sure that we cultivate that appreciation and valuing as we head into our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary year.

### Holley Ulbrich



*The LWVCA had great representation at the LWVSC State Convention at the Litchfield Inn on Pauley's Island. Back row: Janet Marsh, Bill Hare, Janie Shipley, Elizabeth McNamara (LWVUS Board), Aleta Robinson, Dianne Haselton, Eleanor Hare. Seated in front: Linda Gahan, Mary Ann McKenzie (See page 2 for a report on the meeting).*

**A Report on the Spring Niche Yard Sale:** Many thanks to those of you who contributed money, time, energy, books, and plants to the niche yard sale! We had quite a few donations and ended up raising nearly \$350 through this fundraising effort. The niche-approach was more manageable than the larger yard sales. Special thanks is extended to Laura Georgi for donating some amaryllis plants to the sale. These proved to be quite popular and sold out quickly, along with all of the other plant donations. THANK YOU to those of you who helped with pricing, setting up, selling items and “breaking down” the yard sale. This was truly a group effort. We hope to have another niche yard sale in the fall, with an emphasis on plants and other items (to be announced at a later date). So, get those bulbs ready for transplant in the fall! *Also, if you are interested in coordinating the yards sales, let Janie Shipley or Catherine Mobley know!*

**A Discussion on Immigration:  
A Preliminary Discussion in Preparation  
for LWVCA Consensus**

Sometime next year we will have a consensus meeting on immigration, a challenging and complex issue on which the national LWV wants to develop a position and participate in the debate. In preparation for that consensus, Kathy Woodard and I will facilitate a discussion of immigration issues on May 15<sup>th</sup>. We urge you to go to the LWVUS website and read the five background papers on the subject. (<http://www.lwv.org>, click on "Projects" and go to "Immigration Study").

The United States is currently host to between 10 and 12 million illegal immigrants, adding about 500,000 a year, as well as many legal immigrants, some resident aliens and others who have become naturalized citizens.. Between 2000 and 2005, 7.6 million immigrants came to the U.S., contributing more than 40% of our total population growth of 18 million. Most were young men in search of a better life and work opportunities, many of them working in construction or other low-skill jobs where lack of English and formal education is less of a handicap. Some argue that they have displaced our own citizens at the bottom rung of the ladder, depressing entry-level wages. The evidence on the overall economic impact (income and jobs) and fiscal impact (government revenue and expenditures) is mixed. And the impact is not just economic. Immigrants have enriched our existing diversity (think of Mexican restaurants alone!) while creating challenges of assimilation, particularly in public schools. They are heavily concentrated in just four states—California, Florida, New York, and New Jersey, with growing concentrations in Nevada, Texas, Arizona, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia.

Mexico continues to be the largest single source of U.S. immigrants, driven in part by competition from U.S. subsidized agricultural products, especially corn. Some immigrants are political or religious refugees, although we have taken only a handful of Iraqis fleeing the war. Sweden has taken far more. Only about 13% of our immigrants are in the refugee/asylum category; most enter as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens,

or family reunification, and to meet employer needs.

What are the policy issues in immigration? One is control of illegal immigration, especially along the Mexican border. Another is concern about security and terrorism, which restricts entry to people who would have been admitted prior to 9/11. A third is amnesty for illegal aliens already here, especially children; expanding quotas, especially for farm workers; and pathways to citizenship for current resident illegal immigrants.

Give some thought to how you feel about this very important national issue and plan to join us for the discussion on May 15<sup>th</sup>. ~ *Holley Ulbrich*

**The 2007 LWVSC State Convention**

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina held their State Convention April 21-22 at The Litchfield Inn. Hosted by the Georgetown County LWV, the convention had about 40 delegates. The LWVCA was represented by 5 delegates and 3 State Board members: Aleta Robinson, Linda Gahan, Eleanor Hare, Bill Hare, Dianne Haselton, Jan Marsh, Mary Ann McKenzie, and Janie Shipley,

**SPEAKERS:** The Honorable James Clyburn was the featured speaker. He talked about the importance of education, emphasizing that he is not against private schools, but against using public funds for private schools. Elizabeth McNamara, a member of the LWVUS Board and a resident of Georgia, spoke about membership. Her motto is "ASK:" Ask people to meetings, ask people to join, and ask for money. She suggested that leagues ask for money more often than once a year and that every mailing have a return envelope for contributions.

**ACTION PRIORITIES:** No new studies were recommended for the next biennium, but delegates chose four action priorities: Clean and Fair Elections, Criminal Justice, Natural Resources, and Education. The Charleston League will focus on Criminal Justice, specifically prisoner rehabilitation. The Clemson League, with support from Charleston, will look closely at appropriate guidelines for reapportionment. Several leagues from coastal areas were eager to promote action on land management and other natural resources issues. All delegates agreed that LWVSC positions on education and child welfare will continue to need a major share of our attention

**POSITIONS:** Delegates voted to retain LWVSC positions on Natural Resources, State and Local Taxation, Education, Child Welfare, and Transportation. Our position on State and Local Government was retained, but delegates voted to add to the Electoral Democracy Section in order to include the consensus results from the Study of Electronic Voting in SC. Delegates voted to protect the integrity of the electoral process by making the following recommendations, all consistent with the position of the LWVUS:

(1) Mandate random testing of voting machines during every election.; (2) Purchase only voting machines that include a voter-verifiable paper audit trail. Acceptable machines must ensure protection of privacy, allow the voter to verify his/her vote, and provide a reliable basis for a recount if required. (Our national position requires voter-verified paper records for official recounts.); (3) Require that source codes for voting machines be open for inspection. (4) End support of uniform voting machines statewide. Allow individual counties to make individual decisions on this matter. (5) Ensure that all provisional ballots cast by voters lacking HAVA required identification are counted using any of the HAVA provisos.

**OFFICERS:** Barbara Zia from the League of Women Voters of the Charleston Area will serve as LWVSC's new President for the July, 2007 through July, 2009 term. Clemson's Dianne Haselton will continue as Treasurer of the State League, and Eleanor Hare will remain as a Director. ~ *Mary Ann McKenzie*

**Report from Superintendent of  
Oconee County Schools to the  
"Community Leaders' Advisory Council"**

As a member of the Community Leaders' Advisory Council, I attended a meeting on April 17 where Dr. Valerie Truesdale gave an update presentation. SDOC was voted one of the "100 Best Communities in the USA for Young People" by America's Promise "The Alliance for Youth", sponsored by Capital One. The District received the largest grant of all the chosen communities - \$65,000 to fund three additional school nurses and to fully equip three health centers for middle school students. The District also secured a matching fund grant from the local United Way. Now there will be full-time nurses in all of the middle schools.

Oconee County scored higher than the SC average on all PACT tests for grades 3-8 and higher than the SC average on all SAT 2006 tests. They also exceeded the US score on SAT composite score for 2006. The number of students classified as "special education" dropped from 2167 to 1854 over the past 5 years. Early reading intervention is being provided to 122 kindergarten and first grade students. The achievement gap in both ELA and Math has improved for afro-Americans, Hispanics, and free/reduced lunch students.

SDOC and Tri County Tech will have a collaborative venture to expand Nursing and Science programs on a campus in Oconee County - at the Hamilton Career Center, making these college level courses accessible to Oconee County Residents. The District is over half way along on its goal of having every teacher Level II trained and every classroom being equipped with a computer projector.

On a sad note, Dr. Truesdale will be leaving Oconee County for Beaufort this summer. She will be sorely missed. ~ *Reggie Turetzky*

**LWVCA Annual Meeting – April 17**

Thirty-seven LWVCA members and guests gathered at the Dutch Maid Bakery and Cafe in Seneca for our first annual meeting held in Oconee County. An informal social hour of wine and hors d'oeuvres preceded a banquet of home cooked food. Organizers take note that our group prefers red wine. A short business meeting followed the dinner at which time President **Holley Ulbrich** summarized the year's events. Holley is the champion of goal setting and team organization. Changes were made to the bylaws, the budget was adopted, officers and directors were elected, and the proposed local program was approved as outlined in the March VOTER. Since we learned that a proposal to change the Pickens County School Board by eliminating the at-large seats is being pushed by the taxpayers' association and sponsored by Rex Rice, LWVCA members adopted an additional local program item: **Study of the composition of the Pickens County School Board in order to ensure fair representation and adequate channels for citizen input.** This will allow us to take action on the proposed legislation in the coming year. Incoming President, **Janie Shipley**, made a few comments and the meeting adjourned. ~ *Linda Gahan*