



THE VOTER

MAY 2014 Vol. 41, No 5

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Co-President's Message



Endings are a time for reflection and gratitude . . . and beginnings!

In the past two years, we have registered and educated hundreds of new voters. We have attempted to impact legislation, sometimes successfully, in a hundred ways with letters, phone calls and personal visits. We have offered two-dozen informative programs, all open to the public. The world is a better place for our efforts!

It has been my pleasure to meet and work with members and leaders, to learn, to hone new skills and to get involved in the world. I am very much looking forward to taking off this hat, but I am also very much looking forward to working with the new co-presidents, the new board and wearing other LWV hats too.

Thank you to everyone who came to the programs, who registered new voters, who wrote a letter to media editors or legislators, and who tweeted! Thanks to those of you who work in the background, advertising, providing refreshments, and organizing. Our collective efforts are making our communities fair, vibrant and strong!

Happy Trails,

Paula Appling

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THE VOTER

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UPCOMING CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Monday, May 12	Anderson County Candidates Forum , Tri-County Tech, Anderson Campus, 6:30 pm (Elaine Epstein in charge)
Monday, May 19	Oconee County Council Forum , Gignilliat Community Center, 621 N. Townville St., Seneca 6:30 pm (Sandra Gray in charge)
Thursday, May 22	SC House of Representatives, District 3 Forum , Central-Clemson Library, 7:00 pm. Travis McCurry (L), Gary Clary(R), Ed Harris(R)
Tuesday, May 27	SC House of Representatives, District 5 Forum , Captain Kimberly Hampton Memorial Library, Easley, 7:00 pm. Neal Collins (R), Harley Staton (R), Rick Tate (R)
June 6-10	League of Women Voters National Convention , Dallas
Tuesday, June 10	Democratic Party Primary and Republican Party Primary , Polling Precincts, 7am-7pm

COMMON CORE STANDARDS



Our final general meeting of the 2013-14 year for LWVCA, in collaboration with the Jim Self Center on the Future at the Strom Thurmond Institute, was on Common Core Standards. Common Core is an issue that has stirred lots of controversy in South Carolina. The

program featured Dru James from the State Board of Education and Julie Fowler, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction in Greenwood 51, with responses from Edwards Middle School principal Gary Culler and history teacher Vance Jenkins.

In 2007 the National Governor's Association (NGA) and Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) saw a need to develop a set of academic standards for K-12 across the USA to bring uniformity and rigor to our education system. Comments from teachers, parents, educators and associations were included in the June 2010 final draft. In the fall of 2009, South Carolina became the 48th state to join the CSS initiative and the SC State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards on July 14, 2010.

The audience of about 40 at the Strom Thurmond Institute gained a much better understanding of Common Core and where South Carolina is in the process of adoption and implementation. It is academic standards that define what students should know in language arts and math on a particular grade level, not curriculum, which remains under

local control. Teachers are free to develop their own lesson plans to help students reach these standards. It involves testing so that meaningful comparisons can be made not only within the state but across the states. From 2010 until 2014 a transitioning period of training and mentoring will occur with full implementation in 2015. Assessment by way of testing will begin in 2015. After 7 years the program will be evaluated.

The benefits of the Common Core Standards are many: fewer, clearer and higher standards, research and evidence based approach, progression of skills from one grade to the next, rigorous content and skill, and uniform comparison from state to state. Questions from the audience brought out concerns about cost, students falling behind, and the balance between the need for some degree of uniformity and the desire to tailor programs to the needs of the student population. By having widely adopted uniform standards and locally developed curriculum, both of those goals can be addressed.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina supports Common Core. For most of those in attendance, this program provided both reassurance and a better informed foundation for affirming that support.

~Submitted *Holley Ulbrich*



2013-2014 CLEMSON LEAGUE SUCCESSES



With the dedication and professionalism of our Board members and many other League members and friends, our League's accomplishments this past year were many. We had two voter registration drives at Clemson University, one in August and another on National Registration Day in September. We held voter registration at the local high schools headed by Cheryl Lee where several hundred high school students were registered to vote. Several members attended League Leaders Day held in Columbia in August. Elinor Baron hosted the new member welcome and annual kickoff in August. We had many interesting monthly meetings including:

- A Legislative Delegation Panel in September where our local legislators told us about upcoming legislation.
- Jan Hammett from the SC Land and Water Conservation told us what would happen when

Rivers Run Dry;

- We learned about new Voting Technology using computer software developed by Juan Gilbert of Clemson University;
- We had a Ready, Set, Vote program in January where we had the head of the election commissions from Oconee and Pickens Counties discuss voting issues. We had an opportunity at this meeting to have a picture ID made;
- We participated in Sustainable Agriculture National LWV Consensus in February and sent those results into the National League;
- We had an informative Panel discussion about the Affordable Care Act with panelist from Oconee Medical Center, the Clemson Free Clinic and an ACA navigator;
- In April, we had a panel discussion about the common core standards in SC with a member of the State Board of Education and an Assistant Superintendent of Education From Greenwood County participating.

These 7 programs informed the Clemson League as well as the public about many of the current issues facing SC.

We held 4 forums: 2 in Pickens County (Central Town Council and special election for Pickens county school board) and 2 in Oconee (Seneca City Council and Special Election for District 3 County Council seat). We have 3 or 4 more forums scheduled for the month of May covering the June primaries. So that will make 7+ forums that we held this year.

For advocacy,

- We participated in the Oconee and Pickens County delegation annual meetings in January.
- Eleanor Hare started a petition in Pickens County to add an at large member to the Pickens County School Board;
- Other advocacy included participation in Truthful Tuesday in Columbia urging our legislators to fund education, expand Medicaid and protect our voting rights.
- At least 10 League members met with Lynn Teague from the State LWV Board and learned about what we could do to help with the "Don't Dump on South Carolina Legislation" as well as ethics reform legislation.
- Thanks to Holley Ulbrich, we submitted and had published several letters-to-the-editor in local newspapers concerning the importance of voter participation in the upcoming elections.

The 2013-2014 year in League wasn't all work either. We had our annual Holiday Party in December at the OLLI center, which Lib Crocket organized, and the Wine Tasting in February, which raised over \$1500! Thank you, Lib Crockett, Diane Haselton and Mike Stafford!

This is only a short list of activities the League participated in this year; in addition to those mentioned, many other League members participated. Thank you all for your hard work and activism that made this past year a success.

~Submitted Sandra Gray

SOUTH CAROLINA INLAND PORT

The LWVCA has a history of ending the program year with after-dinner speakers who enlighten members and their guests with informative talks about wide-ranging, creative happenings in our state. From research on monitoring the water quality of the Savannah River with little floating computers whose valves can be turned on and off by a smart phone hundreds of miles away to the wind testing facility in Charleston which tests the largest wind turbines in the world.

Because the League is interested in state transportation, this year we invited Mr. Reno Deaton, Executive Director of the Greer Development Corp., to speak about the South Carolina Ports Authority's newest port, the Inland Port in Greer, SC, 212 miles inland from the designated ships in Charleston Harbor.



Mr. Deaton talked about the history of this unique development. Back in the 1980's the SC Ports Authority bought 100 acres in the Upstate in the middle of the I-85 corridor and near the Greenville/Spartanburg Airport and its large land holdings with future possibilities in mind. That eventually led to an inland port opening in October 2013 in Greer and is now considered an excellent example of how planning, partnerships and vision can change the perception and reality of economic progress. The \$46.5 million project is one of several inland ports sprouting up throughout the nation in recent years with more expected.

The SC Inland Port is linked to the Port of Charleston and Atlanta by a Norfolk Southern main rail. The Upstate in particular has a high concentration of companies that are heavy exporters. This facility will help streamline their supply chains and encourage additional growth and investment because it provides shippers with access to more than 94 million consumers within a one-day drive. The inland port will handle containerized goods to and from the fastest-growing port of the Southeast, the [I-85](#) corridor, basically linking several major economic engines, the Port of Charleston, the I-85 Corridor and Atlanta.

The SC Inland Port is not even a year old, but Mr. Deaton said it operated with a profit from day one. The shift to shipping by rail instead of trucks is expected to not only be good for the economy by bringing in jobs, but also good for the environment by saving wear and tear on the state's infrastructure and reducing truck emissions. Mr. Deaton said the data is not in yet, but the inland port is expected to mean 25,000 fewer trucks traveling busy Interstate 26 between upstate South Carolina and the state's coastal ports during its first year of operation.

When asked about the tax structure, Mr. Deaton said that the SC Ports Authority operates as a public agency dedicated to the economic development of the State of South Carolina and does not receive direct appropriations from the state for capital or operations expenses. Instead, the Ports Authority operates like a private business, and funds its operations and investment efforts through its own revenue stream and ability to issue bonds. Greer, SC, therefore does not directly receive any tax benefit from the inland port. Given the Port's youth, the League can watch to see how it develops.

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~Submitted Charlotte Holmes

Information Abounds at LWVSC State Council

On April 26 fifty-one leaguers throughout SC gathered in Columbia for LWVSC Council Meeting “Building League Leadership to Make Democracy Work in South Carolina”. Speakers and facilitators informed us on many topics challenging SC and our nation:

South Carolina’s Mistreatment of Inmates with Mental Illness - Daniel Westbrook, a partner in Nelson, Mullins, Riley and Scarborough, LLP described studies from 1999 to 2003 of the inhumane treatment of mentally ill prisoners to the extremes of dangerousness. In 2005 Mr. Westbrook’s law firm began collecting evidence on the activity at the Department of Corrections and filed a lawsuit seeking injunctive relief. After many years and a six-week trial, Judge Mike Baxley handed down a 45-page order. Two findings are significant: There are system-wide constitutional deficiencies in 6 areas and the Department of Corrections has known of these deficiencies and made only a half hearted effort to solve the problems. The Department of Corrections has failed to identify all mentally ill prisoners, failed to give medication on time or at all, failed to use a record keeping system that can retrieve data, used cruel and unusual punishment to restrain mentally ill prisoners like pepper spray, restrained naked prisoners in chairs for 8-12 hours, put mentally ill prisoners in solitary confinement in shower stalls, and employed inadequate and incompetent staff. Brian Sterling is the new Director of the Department of Corrections who must implement Judge Baxley’s ruling unless it goes to appeal.

Nuclear Waste in South Carolina – Suzanne Rhodes spoke of the Savannah River Site (SRS) where 30 years ago its mission was the safe management of defense nuclear waste through federal funding. Cleanup is now the primary goal until nuclear waste can be shipped to a permanent repository. Problems abound as a result of lousy public policy and inadequate congressional appropriations. France’s AREVA, a leader in international nuclear industry, is building the controversial Mixed Oxide plant at SRS. There is no market for this reprocessed fuel. The Department of Energy has been accepting plutonium shipments from Germany, Italy, Japan and Belgium for reprocessing at SRS without calling for an environmental impact statement. SRS has developed a unique workforce that citizens in the area wish to maintain for economic reasons. Yucca Mountain is closed. LWVSC believes that all current and future nuclear wastes should be managed and monitored at locations where wastes are generated.

Building League’s Leadership Pool- Janie Shipley spoke about 3 components of leadership building – engage, support and mentor. She encouraged us to think intentionally and come up with creative ideas such as social media, Skype or telephone conference calls. Make direct contact, partner with other organizations, network and promote successes. Leagues must find a way to involve younger members.

Hot Topics in SC and the Nation – Duncan Buell reported on voting data collection in 2010 and 2012. Analysis of this public data showed that Horry, Charleston and Richland counties were not collecting all the data in 2010. By 2012, data was cleaner. Our voting machines of 2004 are outdated. At present there is no replacement but two nonproprietary systems in Los Angeles and Austin are merging and look promising.

Tim O’Brien, the LWVUS Voter Protection Project Manager, highlighted the attacks on voters’ rights going on in 26 states. In 2006 Indiana passed the first voter photo ID bill and from then on the assault has been constant. States passed legislation for Voter Photo ID, eliminated or reduced early voting, defeated voter’s day registration, etc. Now that the media is involved, issues are more transparent and attacks are being defeated. The narrative is changing on the scene of protecting voters’ rights but we must be vigilant.

New Voting Technology – With wit and humor, Juan Gilbert described the shard debacle from the 2000 Presidential election in Florida. Problems with misalignment of names and punch holes, hanging shards disallowing tabulation, and accumulation of shards in trays below the ballot compromised the election of the President. Juan Gilbert has developed Prime III, an alternative, nonproprietary voting technology that makes use of pictures of candidates, audio instructions and visual instructions. The software has no memory so the system cannot be hacked. The voter receives a blank piece of paper, inserts it into the Prime III machine, votes for candidates using verbal responses to audio instructions, reviews ballot on screen, makes changes if necessary, prints a paper ballot, reviews this ballot, and places the ballot in the voting box. Ballots are scanned and votes are tabulated.



Lynn Teague reported on the legislation that is pending. Being the second year of the legislative session, most of the bills will die in the next two weeks.

Elaine Epstein Honored

OBSERVER CORPS REPORTS



On April 29, 2014 about 175 people gathered at Tuckers Restaurant in Anderson as Anderson United Way honored Elaine Epstein as “Volunteer of the Year”. Elaine has been involved with Altruista of Anderson, Meals on Wheels of Anderson County, AnMed Health Board, Clemson Area LWV, Temple B’Nai Israel, Safe Harbor Board, Anderson County Hospice, Family Promise of Anderson County and Anderson United Way. Representatives of each of the organizations spoke of Elaine’s participation and enthusiasm and the United Way presented her with a lovely crystal trophy.

VOTER REGISTRATION AT WALHALLA HIGH SCHOOL

On April 30th, Reggie Turetzky and Paulette Chassin registered students in three government classes and in the hall next to the area where seniors received their caps and gowns. A total of 72 students were registered. On May 5th, Reggie Turetzky and Carol Kozma returned to register 24 additional students in three government classes. A total of 96 students were registered. The registration sheets were turned into the Oconee County Voter Registration Office.

~Submitted Reggie Turetzky

The Clemson Planning Commission met 4/14/14 to address the zoning ordinance rewrite and a request for annexation. As a result of public input the commission voted to recommend that city council hold informational meeting(s) to educate residents on the zoning ordinance rewrite before scheduling a public hearing. Fran McGuire volunteered to attend more than one educational meeting if required. PC discussed with Sharon how these might go, maybe focusing on residential for one meeting and commercial for another, etc. Sharon also announced that every property owner in Clemson will receive either a postcard or letter with website link to rewrite, an explanation of what changes will affect them and notice of public hearing. Ruth Andreasen asked about the expense of these mailings and Sharon said the city has budgeted for it (thousands of dollars). Sharon is also working on cross-referencing the old and new zoning ordinance so residents can compare one to the other.

In regard to changes in the zoning ordinance rewrite, one was significant. For properties that are less or equal to half an acre, PC voted to allow 40 % coverage of the property, up from 35%. The request for this change came from city council.

Other business: Planning Commission denied a request for annexation and rezoning as RM 4 of 16 acres on Henderson Drive off of Old Central Road. The City of Clemson does not have the waste treatment capacity to service it, the cat bus system would require another bus, and the fire department would require another substation. Planning Commission had knowledge that the developer was planning to put 900 beds on the property. Another property manager along Old Central Road that owns rentals spoke against the request because the traffic was already unbearable. Ruth requested a traffic study but in the end PC turned it down unanimously.

~Submitted Linda Gahan

Voter registration of high school students in Pickens and Oconee County continues. So far Cheryl Lee, Elinor Baron and Linda Gahan have registered 110 at Daniel H.S., 46 at West Oak H.S. and 60 at Liberty H.S.

Observer Corps

4/21/14 Clemson City Council Meeting:

Representatives of Pacolet-Milliken Enterprises have 180 acres of private property across from Old Stone Church that they want to develop. They propose entering into a joint venture with the City of Clemson to develop a Master Plan. City Council, particularly the mayor and Tim Flower are very receptive to this idea.

The community survey is complete with 385 residents comments. Over 60% of those surveyed were over 50 years of age.

Ben Collins explained the effect of code enforcement and inspections on one component of determining insurance rates for residential and commercial properties. Other components that affect insurance rates are response times of fire department and water systems and hydrants.

Dates for workshops on zoning ordinance rewrite were set as follows: City Council - May 19, 5 pm, Public- June 23, 6 pm. Sharon did not mention the public workshop would be education based as requested by the planning commission.

City council will work on the budget May 2, 8:30am-5 pm.

City Council voted 6 to 1 to request that the PC Registration and Election Commission place a referendum on Nov 4 General Election ballot to allow Clemson voters to consider authorization of Sunday Alcohol sales for consumption-on-premises in Clemson.

City Council voted to allow Jeremy Martin, the Rental Housing Officer, to deal with a delinquent landlord of 100 Dogwood Drive and place a lean on this property for whatever maintenance costs Public Works incurs.

Consult the agenda for other business voted on in the affirmative.

Rick Cotton announced publicly that an appeal has been filed. The city's lawyer, Mr. Logan, has not let them know the next step. Rick Cotton assumes the city has 30 days to response but he did not state this emphatically. Insurance does not cover the response to the appeal. The administrator also reported that a sinkhole has developed on the Days Inn site. The city is researching the party responsible. Anderson is pulling out of CAT. This creates an uncertainty about the route to Pendleton and TCTC. CU is not interested in putting in more money into CAT and Rick Cotton finds this shortsighted given the Douthit Hills plan to move 750 plus Bridge students to a new site and students' need for transportation to TCTC. Greenville Transit Authority (GTA) has created funding problems for CAT. The proposed solution is for CAT to be a direct recipient of federal funds instead of relying on GTA to distribute a proportion of federal funding to CAT. The application process may not be completed until Jan 2015.

5/5/14 Clemson City Council Meeting:

The council met in executive session for legal briefings but had nothing to report.

Rick Cotton received two calls from Mr. Bouche of Greenville Transit Authority calling for mediation in the dispute for FTA funding for transit and capital. The first call quoted a cost of \$1000 per day with no specific mediator, and the second call increased the cost to \$400 /hour for 6 hours divided between the two parties (GTA & CAT) with GTA's law firm as mediator. Council questioned what they wanted to mediate and voted to contact John Castille of Greenlink and Mr Bouche of GTA to get more information.

The item request to approve an Agreement for Professional Services with ICA Engineering for Environmental Services for Berkley Drive Share-Use Path and Pedestrian Bridge was tabled until additional bids can be obtained. The meeting lasted 30 minutes.

~Submitted Linda Gahan

ONLY AT A LEAGUE MEETING: RED, WHITE AND BLUE HYBRIDS



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

Anderson County Council 1st and 3rd Tuesday, 6:00 pm
 Pickens County School Board 4th Monday, 7:30 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 _____

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.

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

P. O. Box 802
Clemson, SC 29633

[Recipient]

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