

President's Message

There are many resources available at the website of the LWVUS, www.lwv.org. I encourage you to visit this site for information on the many projects in which local, state and the national Leagues are involved. From the home page, if you click on the "projects" tab, you will find information on the vote411.org project. This site provides nonpartisan information to the public with both general and state-specific details on many aspects of the election process. It is a good site to which to refer newly registered voters. In the "take action" section, one could click on "find your Representative" (national, state and local) which might also be of help to newly registered voters. A click on the "take action" tab will also give you information on how to join the Grassroots Lobby Corps, a free e-mail service which will alert you on how to take action to support the League's priority issues.

League members are encouraged to visit the "immigration study" under the "projects" tab. Here one will find many resources related to immigration policy and immigration reform. One can also listen to a panel presentation on *Immigration Policy in the 21st Century* which took place at the Council 2007 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. I hope that all LWVCA members will take part in the consensus process in December and January as we proceed through our Immigration Study.

On the League's website, one can read about why the LWVUS opposes an ID requirement for voter registration. LWVUS President, Mary Wilson, says that a voter ID requirement will "undermine voter participation, especially by older women, minorities and persons with disabilities." The state League President in Arizona says that "people should not have to pay to register to vote", referring to the costs of obtaining one of the required forms of identification.

When I first heard Bill Moyers talk about Clean Elections some years ago, I thought this is the kind of project the League could really sink its teeth into. I hope that you will join us as we look closer at this system of campaign finance reform, (also called "voter owned elections") at the November meeting on Tuesday, the 27th.

November and December will be busy months and we hope to see you at the upcoming events outlined in this newsletter. You will not receive another newsletter until January. The LWVCA Board joins me in wishing you and your family a happy holiday season.

~ *Janie Shipley, LWVCA President*



The LWVCA October meeting on solutions for Global Warming attracted a large crowd (see page 5 for more information). The meeting featured a screening of the documentary "Green is the New Red, White and Blue."

***IS IT POSSIBLE TO REDUCE THE
INFLUENCE OF MONEY ON POLITICS?
Find out at the LWVCA General Meeting!
Tuesday, November 27, 2007***

(Note the change in date from the third Tuesday to the fourth Tuesday, Nov. 27)

The SC League of Women Voters, the SC Progressive Network, and the SC NAACP think it is possible to reduce the influence of money on politics. Since 2000, these groups have been working on legislation that would create grants for people to run for the legislature or statewide office. This system of public financing, often referred to as "Clean Elections", or "Voter Owned Elections", has been successfully operating for the past six years in Maine and Arizona. The November meeting of the LWVCA will focus on how we can help reduce the influence of money on elections and revitalize our democracy. The meeting will be on **TUESDAY, NOV 27** (instead of the usual third Tuesday, to avoid holiday conflicts). Coffee and conversation begin at 7:00 p.m. and the program at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Clemson, 226 Pendleton Road, Clemson. We will explore the status of voter owned elections nationally, look at its movement in the SC legislature, then plan a strategy for what we can do in Anderson, Oconee and Pickens Counties to move this legislation forward. Brett Bursey of the SC Progressive Network will be a guest speaker.

The SC Clean Elections Act, first introduced in 2001, has finally moved through the Senate Judiciary Committee and will be on the calendar when the legislature reconvenes in January 2008. The Co-chair of the SC Progressive Network, Donna Dewitt says "It's no wonder so few people are voting or running for office because the candidate that spends the most money is 96% likely to be the winner. The electoral system we have now more closely resembles auctions, rather than elections."

Bill sponsor Sen. Clementa Pinckney told his legislative colleagues, "If you are concerned about the rising cost of campaigning, tired of "dialing for dollars" and want a better relationship with your constituents (people who can vote for you, not corporate PACs), we encourage you to sign the Clean Election pledge".

South Carolina consistently has amongst the highest rates of uncontested elections for legislative seats than any state in the nation. A study done six years ago by the University of South Carolina found that a majority of citizens -- Republicans, Democrats and Independents -- support clean elections. The authors concluded that "more than 60 percent of those surveyed believe that the cost of elections keeps many qualified people from running for public office, a majority believes that the state should have a system of public financing, and almost 60 percent would support a system of public financing if it would cost the average citizen about \$3.50 a year."

~ Submitted by Janie Shipley

***Town Meeting with
Jim Rex, State Superintendent of Education***

The LWVCA will partner with the Jim Self Center on the Future to host an upstate community meeting with State Superintendent of Education, Dr. Jim Rex. Since Dr. Rex took office less than a year ago, he has been vigorously developing innovative and comprehensive recommendations designed to accelerate education reform in South Carolina. During this community meeting, Dr. Rex will discuss and answer questions related to his five-point strategy, the study results of the two education funding task forces, and the proposals he will present to the General Assembly in 2008. This meeting is open to the public. Mark your calendar for **Monday, December 3, 2007, at 6 p.m. in the Self Auditorium at Clemson University's Strom Thurmond Institute**. For further information, contact Donna London at 864.656.4700 or dlondon@strom.clemson.edu.

~Submitted by Donna London

***The Immigration Consensus Process
Begins Next Month!***

As reported in the previous *Voter*, the immigration consensus is a major undertaking. Consensus is a process that only involves LWV members. Guests may be present at the meeting but are not allowed to participate in the discussion that leads to the formulation of a consensus, or general agreement about what our position should be. Consensus is more than majority, less than unanimity. Minority opinions will also be conveyed. When we have completed our consensus, we send it to the national board to be combined with similar reports from Leagues throughout the country. We will also compile state reports and host an event, possibly in conjunction with state council in April, which focuses on immigration in South Carolina.

The first LWVCA consensus meeting will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 11, at 7:30 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship (preceded by a social time at 7:00 pm.

To prepare for the meeting, visit the LWVUS website (lwwus.org) and review some of the background information provided by LWVUS. (The LWVCA website also has a wealth of information on Immigration issues). Ada Lou Steirer, Eleanor Hare and Linda Gahan will also provide a handout and a brief summary relevant to each of the study questions (see below). Holley Ulbrich will facilitate the meeting.

Before we describe the national consensus questions, here is a question we would like you to also consider: How much are we willing to spend to significantly reduce the flow across the Southern border? (And how are we going to pay for it?) There are other ways into this country than on foot (or truck) across land. Drug smugglers have landed airplanes (in both Arkansas and SC and abandoned the planes in fields). In addition to air, short sea passages are also possible.

We are asked to consider the following three national consensus questions (Questions 1, 3, and 5) during our meeting in December:

1. Federal immigration should take into consideration criteria such as the following (rate as high priority, lower priority, disagree, no consensus):
 - (a) ethnic and cultural diversity
 - (b) economic, business and service employment needs
 - (c) environmental impact/sustainability
 - (d) family reunification of authorized immigrants and citizens with spouses and minor children
 - (e) history of criminal activity
 - (f) humanitarian crises/political persecution in home countries
 - (g) immigrant characteristics (health and age)
 - (h) rights of all workers to safe working conditions and livable wage
 - (i) rights of families to remain together
 - (j) rights of all individuals in U.S. to fair treatment under the law (fair hearing, right to counsel, right of appeal, and humane treatment)
 - (k) education and training

Select the three most important of these criteria and rank them 1, 2, 3.

3. Federal immigration law should provide an efficient, expeditious system (with minimal or no backlogs) for legal entry into the U.S. for immigrants who are:

- (a) immediate family members joining family members already admitted for legal permanent residence in the U.S.
- (b) entering the U.S. to meet labor needs
- (c) entering the U.S. as students
- (d) entering the U.S. because of persecution in home country

(Rate each high priority, low priority, disagree, or no consensus)

5. Federal immigration law should address and balance the long term federal financial benefit from immigrations with the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.

We look forward to seeing you at this important meeting next month! Also, save the date of January 15, 2008 for the second consensus meeting on immigration.

***Excerpts from the Study of Latinos
in South Carolina***

The information below is provided to help us prepare for the immigration consensus meetings in December and January. We hope this information will help you to make a more informed decision about this consensus issue.

The Consortium for Latino Immigration Studies at the University of South Carolina has prepared a study: *The Economic and Social Implications of the Growing Latino Population in South Carolina*. This article selects excerpts from the study.

The Hispanic/Latino population of South Carolina currently comprises about 3.3% of the South Carolina population (out of a total population of 4,113,961), as shown below.

Latino, native born	57,445 (1.4%)
Latino, foreign born, U.S. citizen	8,099 (0.2%)
Latino, foreign born, not U.S. citizen	69,497 (1.7%)

The non-Latino population of South Carolina, without regard to whether or not foreign born, is as follows:

White alone	2,704,013 (65.7%)
Black alone	1,170,710 (28.5%)
American Indian/Alaska native	13,736 (0.3%)
Asian alone	44,161 (1.1%)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone	1,210 (0.03%)
Some other race alone	5,409 (0.13%)
Two or more races	39,681 (1.0%)

“The U.S. Bureau of the Census reports that South Carolina’s foreign-born population grew more rapidly between 2000 and 2005 than did that of any other states in the United States. Most of the Palmetto state’s foreign-born are Latinos.”

Employment: At the same time, there has been a 3.1% decline in real earnings for full-time South Carolina workers. Three occupations (Construction, Landscaping, and Animal Slaughtering, which includes poultry processing) account for most of this decline. Each of these industries has had a net increase in Hispanic workers and a decrease of real median wages. Other industries, such as Motor Vehicle and Motor Vehicle Equipment, showed dramatic increases in both number of people employed and the salaries for both black and white South Carolinians, but not for Hispanic South Carolinians.

Education: “In June 2006, of the 691,054 students enrolled in public schools, 26,201 were designated Hispanic(3.79%). In June 2006, approximately 16,004 (of the 26,201) were designated as English Language Learners (ELL) (62% of the total Latino student population), indicating that almost 40 percent of Latino students are fluent in English and fully integrated in ‘mainstream’ classrooms.”

Medical Care: “USC survey data reveal that almost half of Latinos in South Carolina are not seeking medical treatment.” Seventy-four percent of the survey respondents had no health insurance and 35% had no health insurance for their children. About 20% of doctor’s visits were for check-ups and vaccinations, almost 17% for respiratory problems, and almost 14% for delivery and newborn care. “Data from the S.C. Office of Research and Statistics indicate that in 2005 (last data available), Latinos comprised only 1.6 percent of all the hospital discharges (inpatient, outpatient, and/or emergency room visits). And, of the total number of people visiting emergency rooms in 2005, only 1.6% was Hispanic/Latino.”

How Hispanic South Carolinians pay for emergency room care:

38%	Paid out of pocket
33%	Paid by Insurance
23%	Paid by Medicaid
5%	Paid by Medicare
0.6%	“indigent”

“A large percentage of the Medicaid payments went to Latino children who were born in the United States.” It was stated that many Latinos make arrangements with hospitals to pay in installments.

Conclusion: “For most of the expanding Latino population ... the challenges of settling in South Carolina are confounded by living in poverty and working in low-skill, low-wage employment.”

This short collection of excerpts cannot do justice to this excellent study. We urge you to read it for yourselves at:

<http://moorecms.graysail.com/moore/research/presentstudy/hispanic/CMAReport0809.pdf>

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

**October Meeting
Draws a Large Crowd!**

Global warming is on everyone’s minds these days, as witnessed by attendance at our October meeting. More than sixty people packed the social room at the UU Fellowship to see an objective and thought-provoking documentary by Thomas Freedman: *Green Is the New Red, White, and Blue*. Unlike Al Gore’s *An Inconvenient Truth*, Freedman shied away from scary scenarios of impending doom, focusing instead on possible solutions to global warming. We still have a copy of the documentary, so if you would like to borrow it to view individually, or as a group, contact Steve Johnson (johnsos05@yahoo.com).

This was followed by a report by our own Bea

Bailey, chair of the Clemson University Focus the Nation Committee, on global warming-related activities at Clemson University. To date, the Committee has sponsored several events, including a talk by Beatrice Bira of Uganda, a presentation by Dr. John Ikerd (author of *Sustainable Capitalism*), a sustainable farm tour and benefit dinner at the Happy Berry Farm in Six Mile, and an ongoing Environmental Coffee House. The activities at Clemson University will culminate in a national launch of Focus the Nation on January 25. This event will include a presentation by Dr. Eban Goodstein, Focus the Nation Project Director, and a round-table discussion by South Carolina policy-makers. More information about this effort can be found at <http://www.clemson.edu/focus/>

The meeting ended with Colin Hagan, a recent graduate of Furman University and member of the steering committee of the Southern Energy Network, showing us an outstanding documentary that he has produced called: *Treasured Places in Peril: Global Warming Impacts on the Southeast, South Carolina*.

~ Submitted by Steve Johnson

**FOCUS on
LWVCA Members**

As described in the October newsletter, we are pleased to welcome several new members to the LWVCA. In the next few newsletters, we will feature brief stories and short “bios” of some of our new members and more seasoned members. If you would like to let us know what inspired you to join the LWVCA, e-mail the *Voter* editor, Catherine Mobley at camoble@clemson.edu. We’d love to hear your stories!

This month, we are featuring short bios of three of our new members, Michelle Chin, Rachael Estep, and Robin Kimbrough-Melton. And, for added inspiration, Kathy Woodard shares her story of what it means to be a member of the League of Women Voters.

Michelle Chin, who joined LWVCA in September, moved to the Clemson-area from Pennsylvania after graduating from Rutgers University in 2005. She is currently employed at the Clemson University Foundation. After four years of studying politics and public health, Michelle was eager to find others that were interested in politics as much as she was. Happily, she discovered that there was a local League of Women Voters! To take advantage of the fresh air and free time, she spends her weekend exploring local waterfalls, lots of reading, and experimenting with new recipes when she should be studying for the LSATs.

Rachael Estep, another new LWVCA member, is a senior at Clemson who is double majoring in History and Secondary Education Social Studies. She moved to Clemson when she was in seventh grade and graduated from D.W. Daniel High School in 2004. Rachael enjoys anything historical, reading, and watching the Colbert Report. She is excited to be involved with the LWVCA because she is planning on being a high school social studies teacher and wants to demonstrate civic responsibility to her students. Rachael is very passionate about not only getting the young generation to vote, but also making sure their vote is an informed one.

Robin Kimbrough-Melton joined the League in September 2007 after learning about the League’s advocacy on criminal justice issues. She has joined the Criminal Justice Committee where she is chairing the subcommittee on children.

Robin, a native Nebraskan, received her law degree in 1983 from the University of Nebraska. She came to South Carolina from the Washington DC area 12 years ago to serve as the associate director at USC’s Institute for Families in Society. Robin is currently a research professor at Clemson University’s

Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life where she also serves as the director of the National Center on Rural Justice and Crime Prevention. She has long been active in service system reform related to juvenile justice, criminal justice, education, social services, substance abuse services, and the courts. Her background includes working as legal counsel for the Nebraska and Maryland legislatures.

Robin is currently directing Building Dreams, a federally funded effort to provide assistance to children of prisoners in 9 counties of South Carolina, and she is chairing state and national committees aimed at developing supportive services for families impacted by incarceration. She is the associate director of Strong Communities, a multi-year initiative in Greenville and Anderson counties to prevent child abuse and neglect. She also teaches courses on international human rights law and children’s policy in the Institute’s PhD on International Family and Community Studies.

Robin received the 2005 Award for Distinguished Professional Service from the South Carolina Professional Society on Abuse of Children and the 2006 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Child Advocacy (by a non-psychologist) from the American Psychological Association Division of Child, Youth, and Family Services.

In her spare time, Robin enjoys traveling and gourmet cooking.

Kathy Woodard: “What League Means to Me”

Back in the 1990’s I went to hear the late journalist Jack Anderson speak. The auditorium was filled to capacity, so I found myself standing in the back, leaning against a wall. His speech dealt with civic engagement (or rather, the lack thereof) in America. Mr. Anderson talked about civic apathy among our young people, and their growing disinterest in all things deemed political, and the dangers of such disengagement and civic illiteracy for democratic governments. Toward the end of his speech, he said something that has since been etched in my brain like a mantra:

What you do not understand, you will not value. What you do not value, you will not fight for. What you will not fight for, you will lose.

As someone who works in higher education with college students, I began to reflect upon ways in which I could begin to support more understanding of the importance of our civic participation at all levels of society, and particularly among our young people. I wanted to help them to understand the importance of voting. More importantly, I wanted them to understand the CRITICAL importance of the process of examination and deliberation on issues that impact our communities locally and globally, the power behind making an informed and conscious choice when we go to the polls, and the danger that can result when one casts an uninformed and unconscious vote.

It just so happened that, Dianne Haselton, a very active member of both the Local and State Leagues, worked with me around that same time. She invited me to attend the Annual Meeting of the LWVCA with her. I was impressed by the energy and the passion of the members I met that night, and I joined the League at that time. I have also been a member of the Board and have served as a moderator at a number of candidate and issue forums sponsored by LWVCA.

To me, the League is a keeper of the flame for democracy. Our focus on informed and active participation and on voter education on issues and advocacy makes us warriors of a different type – a corps that serves to protect and uphold the democratic principles upon which this country is based. I am proud to be a member. I can honestly say that of all the clubs and organizations I have been a part of over the course of my life, the League has meant the most to me and has taught me the most about what “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” means in these United States. My hope is that more and more young people will join the League, take up its cause, and

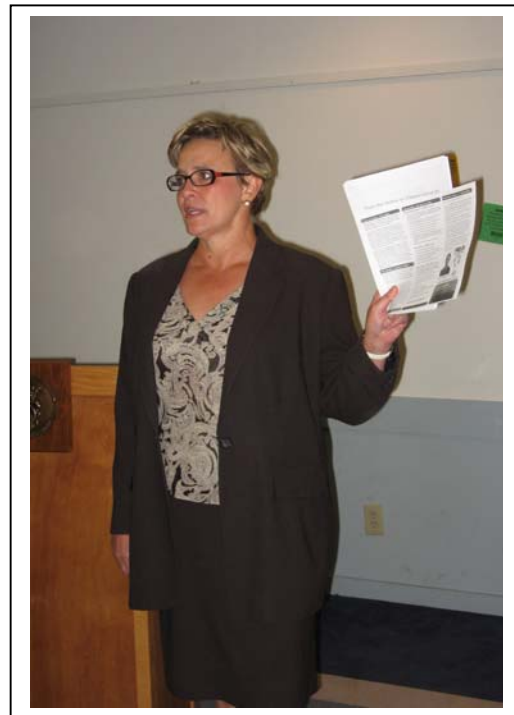
learn as I have from valuable mentors -- people whose devotion and dedication to the values of a democratic society are unparalleled. In many ways, the future of our country - and our way of life - depends upon it.

Please join us in welcoming Michelle, Rachael, and Robin to the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area! And, thank you to Kathy Woodard for sharing her “League Story”!

***Did you know that the
LWVCA is preparing to
Celebrate its 40th Anniversary?***

Save the date! The surviving charter members, all five of them, are planning a celebration of the 40th birthday of the Clemson League at Calhoun Bridge (formerly Morrison Annex) on Sunday, January 27th in the afternoon. This should be a gala occasion, featuring additional stories about the LWVCA, its members, and its many successes! ~Submitted by **Holley Ulbrich**

***LWVCA in Action:
Another Photo from the October Meeting***



LWVCA Member, Bea Bailey, speaking at the October meeting about Focus the Nation.