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LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
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Volume 38, Number 6
November 2010

LWVCA President: Linda Gahan
The Voter Editor: Catherine Mobley

OBSERVOR CORPS

Clemson City Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Seneca City Council	2 nd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Pickens County Council	1 st and 3 rd Monday, 7:00 p.m.
Oconee County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.
Anderson County Council	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 6:00 p.m.
Pickens County School Board	4 th Monday, 7:30 p.m.
Oconee County School Board	1 st and 3 rd Tuesday, 7:00 p.m.

Contribution Form

League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area - LWVCA
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THE VOTER

November 2010 Volume 38, Number 6 Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

TABLE OF CONTENTS

President's Message



The League of Women Voters is the largest Grassroots organization in the country. It is Nonpartisan and does not support candidates. We Study issues, form positions and Act on those positions. To remember our mission just remember: "Grandmothers Never Spank Anyone."

The League of Women Voters is active in **voter registration and voter education**. In September LWVCA registered over 100 new voters, 43 of them at West Oak High School. We can increase these numbers in the future as we find ways to better ways to connect with unregistered voters. **THANK YOU** to all our members who **PARTICIPATED** in Voter Registration this year. In October we held 5 candidate forums for Congressional Districts 3 and 8, Pickens County Council and Pickens School Board. At these forums we partnered with WYFF4 – Channel 4, LWVSC, CU College Democrats and Republicans and Tri County Tech College Student Republicans and Democrats. Partnering increases our visibility and ultimately our membership and mission. **THANK YOU** to all our members who **PARTICIPATED** in candidate forums.

MEMBERSHIP in LWVCA has increased by 13 members. We are so excited to have new faces with new ideas. **Now our challenge is to GET OUR NEW MEMBERS INVOLVED.** We are doing this by mentoring, weekly updates, and informal membership luncheons. New members can find your place in the league by volunteering for an event, coming to an After-the Election celebration and a Holiday Party, attending a book discussion, and showing up at an informal luncheon. Members, you can invite one of the new members to our next programs on Water Distribution on November 9 and School Governance and State Program Planning in January 11. **PARTICIPATION IN LEAGUE ACTIVITIES IS THE WAY TO ACHIEVE OUR MISSION:** Informed and active participation of citizens in government. We thereby safeguard our democracy and create safe and health communities.

VISIBILITY helps us achieve our mission. Voters must be informed so they make intelligent choices. We can inform by educating others on the studies we have done, holding candidate forums, publishing candidates' questionnaires, encouraging small community gatherings and face-to-face interaction with candidates, visiting candidate websites, paying attention to commercial media, participating in a candidate's campaign, etc. At a recent party I spoke with a former principal of a local school. I asked him what he thought about the candidates running for superintendent of education. He told me he did not know how they felt on the issues. He does not use the internet. Here is an "intelligent" educator whom we need to reach

GET INVOLVED IN THE LEAGUE. VOLUNTEER. VOTE!

~ Linda Gahan President LWVCA

President's Message	1
Calendar of Events	2
After-the-Election Party	2
Book Discussion Group	2
November General Meeting	3
LWVCA Holiday Party	3
VOTE411.org	3
September Focus on Education	3
Voting Machines Activity	4
Spotlight on LWVCA Members	4
Voter Education Forums	5
Ensuring Judicial Independence	6
National Popular Vote	6
Elisabeth McNamara's Travel Blog	6
LWVCA Program Planning	7
An Update on School Vouchers	8

THE VOTER
 League of Women Voter Clemson Area
 P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633
www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| November 2 | General Election at Voting Precincts, 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. |
| November 2 | LWVCA Board Meeting, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 6:00 pm |
| November 4 | What Happened Last Tuesday? After-the-Election Party/Commentary, Cheryl Lee's House, 510 Bentbrook Lane, Clemson, 7:00 – 9:00 pm |
| November 9 | “South Carolina vs. North Carolina: Go with the Flow”, with Dr. Caitlyn Dyckman. Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Social Time, 7:00 p.m. Program begins at 7:30 p.m. |
| November 13 | Book Discussion, Holley Ulbrich's house, 9:00 a.m. |
| December 14 | LWVCA Holiday Party, Holley Ulbrich's house, 7:00 p.m. |
| January 4 | LWVCA Board Meeting, Clemson City Hall, 6:30 p.m. |
| January 11 | State Program Planning/Consensus Questions on School Governance, Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, 7:00 p.m. |
| January 26 | Informal Membership Lunch, Anderson, TBA, Noon |

WHAT HAPPENED LAST TUESDAY? AFTER-THE-ELECTION PARTY

WHEN: November 4, 2010; 7:00 – 9:00 pm

WHERE: Cheryl Lee's House, 510 Bentbrook Lane, Clemson

WHAT TO BRING: Hors d'oeuvre or bottle of wine to share

Come join in the fellowship with LWVCA members and friends, and hear an election commentary from Bruce Ransom, LWVCA member and a CU Political Scientist.

LWVCA to Host Book Discussion Group

The twice-a-year, read-a-book, soup and salad group will be meeting on Saturday, November 13th, at 9:00 a.m., for brunch and discussion. Each year we pick two books of interest to Leaguers to read and discussion. The selection for this fall is Linda Tarr-Whelan's *Women Lead the Way: Your Guide to Stepping Up to Leadership and Changing the World*. Linda will be speaking at a Clemson University event in November so now is a good time to buy and read the book, listen to Linda, and then come share your thoughts and food at Holley Ulbrich's on a football-free fall Saturday.

Editor's Note: The version of the Voter that was mailed to LWV members indicated that the book discussion would be held on November 20 at 11:00 a.m.. The correct date and time is Saturday November 13 at 9:00 a.m

SC vs. NC – GO WITH THE FLOW

LWVCA November General Meeting, Tuesday, November 9

Our November 9th meeting, SC VS NC – GO WITH THE FLOW, will feature Dr. Caitlin Dyckman, Assistant Professor of City and Regional Planning at Clemson University. Professor Dyckman has been one of the researchers on a grant project studying the economic and environmental issues surrounding the Savannah River. She will present some of the findings and policy issues that arose from that study. The Savannah and its tributaries are the lifeblood of our three counties as well as the eight counties to the south of Anderson along the river. The level, the flow, and the health of the water in our lakes and rivers are vital to our economic and community well-being. Be sure to join us on November 9th (7 p.m. social time, 7:30 program) to learn more about this important resource and how we can protect it.

~ Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

September General Meeting Focuses on Education

Holley Ulbrich and Linda Gahan co-presented the September 14th general meeting of the League membership

The meeting, “Whose Schools are They?” focused on education at all three levels--federal, state, and local. Linda Gahan gave us a briefing on the newly adopted national study on the Federal Role in Public Education. No Child Left Behind, followed by Obama's initiative on merit pay for teachers and the stimulus funds used to keep teachers in the classroom, has focused attention on this issue of great importance both to federal-state relations and to education. The LWVUS study will focus on the role of the federal government in education policymaking, with possible consideration of funding, common standards and/or governance relationships among all levels of the government.

Mark Your Calendars for the LWVCA Holiday Party

Mark your calendar for the annual holiday party! It will be, as always, at the Ulbrichs, on Tuesday, December 14th from 7 to 9 p.m. Beverages and paper goods will be supplied. Bring a dish of holiday edibles to share. This tradition has been going on for years, if not decades, so whether you are a long time Leaguer or a newcomer, add it to your December celebrations. Spouses, members or not, are most welcome.

~ Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

The League of Women Voters'

VOTE411.ORG

*The One-Stop-Shop for
All Your Election Information Needs*

At www.VOTE411.org you can access:

- *Polling Place Locations*
- *Voter Qualifications*
- *ID Requirements*
- *Election Dates*
- *Absentee Ballot, Information & Early Voting*
- *Tools for Overseas Voters*
- *Registration Deadlines and Registration Forms*
- *Contact Information for Election Officials*
- *Data: Candidates in Federal, State & Local Races Ballot Measure Information and more!*

We know your time is valuable and so is your vote! VOTE411 provides comprehensive, easy-to-access information for all your voting needs in one convenient location! Go to www.VOTE411.org, get educated, and get out and VOTE!

Active Summer for Voting Machines

As always, when voting season arrives, the issue of the reliability of voting machines pops back into our newspapers and TV screens.

An Op Ed battle over voting machines was waged in *The State* this summer. On June 27, "Voting Machines Deserve Second Look" appeared, written by LWVSC President Barbara Zia. Steve Skardon, director of the Palmetto Project, responded, defending the voting machines. Duncan Buell (LWVSC) responded to Skardon's Op Ed with "Voting Machines 'buggy, unstable, exploitable'" on July 16. Finally, "South Carolina's Ballots Can't Be Recounted," written by Eleanor Hare, appeared on August 16.

Eleanor also wrote "State Should Examine Voting Machines," which appeared in the *Pickens County Sentinel* in July.

On September 29, the Charleston City Paper ran "Those aren't palmetto bugs in our voting machines: Democracy Under Assault" by Will Moredock as their lead article. On October 11, a letter from Steve Skardon defended the voting machines. Then, on October 13, Frank Heindel, a Charleston commodities trader, shared some disquieting entries in the audit logs from Charleston County voting machines.

Meanwhile, on October 5, the Columbia Free Times ran "Gambling with Democracy" by Corey Hutchins and on October 14, "The Big Picture" on SC ETV addressed the controversy over voting machines.

~Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Spotlight on LWVCA Members!

To date, we have 13 new members who have joined LWVCA for the first time this year! Welcome! Five of the thirteen are profiled below.

* **Matt Laiewski** is a retired programmer and his wife, **Elaine**, is retired from Clemson University. She's currently at Clemson Community Care. Matt spoke highly of League forums and is looking forward to exploring our organization. Elaine plans to get involved in Voter Services.

Spotlight on LWVCA Members!

(continued)

* **Margie Langston** has joined after coming to League meetings for almost a year! She's interested in voting machines, immigration, and forums. In her spare time, she enjoys swimming, gardening, her Department 56 Dickens Village, and playing at bridge.

* **Lauretta Park** taught psychology to Clemson University students for 32 years before retiring in 2004. Her family includes 5 children (3 boys and twin daughters). She joined the League to learn more about candidates and current issues.

* **Renee Wagenseil** works in the soils lab at Clemson University. By joining the League, she hopes to learn about current political issues (especially state issues) and make better-informed decisions.

For newer members, five established members are profiled below:

* **Linda Gahan**, current President, is interested in education and natural resources. Before retirement, she was a Research Associate Professor in Biological Sciences and interested in pesticide resistance in agricultural pests.

* **Eleanor Hare** has taught computer science at Clemson University and in her spare time plays the oboe and English horn. Her League interests include voting machines and sustainable energy.

* **Alice Flower**, LWVCA treasurer, works at Itron as a computer programmer. She is a hiker and avid cyclist.

* **Aleta Robinson** is a retired school-teacher. Her main interests are in the penal system, but she is passionate about politics in general.

* **Carol Ward** has been interested in politics for as long as she can remember. She is retired from CU's English department where she taught and made movies. In her spare time, she enjoys learning and teaching and spending time with her cats.

~Submitted by Paula Appling



NEW LEAGUE MEMBER BECOMES A VOLUNTEER AT CANDIDATE FORUM

LEFT: The League held a forum for candidates for the Pickens County Council Seat 1 at the Central-Clemson Library on October 12. From left to right, the candidates are Bill Reid (R) and Jeff Martin (D). The candidates' answers to questions posed by the League can be found the LWVCA home page (<http://www.lwvclemsonarea.org>)

RIGHT: Ken Robinson, new LWVCA member, has joined Alice Flower and Carol Kozma as experienced timekeepers. Ken timed the responses from candidates at the Pickens County Council Seat 1.



PARTNERSHIP OF ENTHUSIASTIC NEW VOTERS AND SEASONED VOTER EDUCATORS WORKING TOGETHER TO ELICIT CONVERSATION ON ISSUES

LEFT: Left to right: John Dalen (Constitutional Party), Jane Dyer (Democratic Party), Jeff Duncan (Republican Party), Holley Ulbrich (Moderator), Linda Gahan (League President)

RIGHT: A panel of College Republicans (William Sturm, Miles Jones) and College Democrats (Farris Johnson, Will Dukes) from Clemson University joined the League in asking questions of the candidates for 3rd Congressional District.

Conference on Ensuring Judicial Independence & Diversity in South Carolina

In early October, LWVSC launched its project "Safeguarding Democracy: A Quest for a More Diverse and Independent Judiciary. On October 7, a forum was held at the Strom Thurmond Institute to launch this initiative. Some comments from the discussion:

- Women received the right to vote in SC in 1969.
- Women could serve as judges in SC beginning in 1969.
- Judiciary diversity matters as Ruth Ginsberg pointed out in the case of the 13 year-old female who was stripped searched and found to have only ibuprofen.
- Judiciary diversity matters because litigants want to be sure of a fair trial.
- Developing countries and the US face similar challenges relating to the balance of power in government.
- Independence allows the judiciary to be impartial without fear of retribution.
- Judiciary independence maintains the trust of the public. An open and transparent system is needed to produce diverse courts.
- While women make up 52% of population in SC., women make up 29% of the bar in SC and minorities make up 5%.
- SC Senate has 0 women out of 47, SC House has 17 women out of 124.
- With the exception of the Probate Judges who are elected, a Merit Selection Committee (MSC) selects SC judges.
- The MSC is made up of 10 members. The Senate President Pro Tem appoints five and three of these must be seated lawyers. The Speaker of the House appoints five, three of which must be seated lawyers.
- The present MSC has 9 men and one woman.
- The merit selection process in SC is not a true merit selection process found at the federal level where the President nominates a Supreme Court justice and the Senate confirms. Instead, the MSC qualifies three candidates for one judgeship and the legislature picks the judge. VA is the only other state to do so.
- The merit selection process is very comprehensive requiring a test, an interview and intense personal scrutiny. This is a deterrent for women and minorities for putting their name forward to be considered for a judgeship.
- Once the MSC qualifies a lawyer to be a judge, the committee must select three qualified candidates to pass forward to the legislature.
- Once a candidate's name is presented to the legislature, an informal lobbying process begins prior to the final vote for judge.

NATIONAL POPULAR VOTE A Strategy for Direct Election of the President and Vice President

The position: LWVUS believes that the direct-popular-vote method for electing the President and Vice-President is essential to representative government. The LWV believes, therefore, that the Electoral College should be abolished. We support the use of the National Popular Vote Compact as one acceptable way to achieve the goal of the direct popular vote for the election of the president, until the abolition of the Electoral College is accomplished. The League also supports uniform voting qualification and procedures for presidential elections. The League supports changes in the presidential election system – from the candidate selection process to the general election.

The U.S. Constitution gives the states exclusive and plenary control over the manner of awarding their electoral votes. States that choose the National Popular Vote Compact would agree to award all their electoral votes to the presidential candidate who receives the most popular votes in all 50 states. For example, if SC were part of the NPV Compact and the Republican Presidential won the most votes in SC but the Democratic candidate won the most votes in the U.S., SC would cast all electoral votes for the Democratic candidate.

LWV Arizona is spearheading the NVP. They are looking for advocates who will pull together resources to help introduce NPV to the public and fellow League members. Let's form a focus group. Contact Barbara Klein at the following e-mail address: drbarbaraklein@120years.com

From Elisabeth MacNamara's Travel Blog

The DISCLOSE Act and Citizens United have been major topics on the road. The latest flap about the Chamber of Commerce seems to miss the key point that regardless of whether the Chamber collects dues from foreign-owned corporations, the Chamber is making the largest campaign expenditures in history while refusing to disclose its donors.

The point is that secret money has no place in American elections. The voters deserve to know who is speaking to them through these ads.

LWVCA Program Planning

Every January the League engages in program planning—national in even-numbered years, state in odd-numbered years, and local every year. This is the year for state program planning. We have two important issues to deal with at our January 11th meeting.

One is whether we wish to concur with the Charleston League's position on drug policy. If you want to learn more about that position, you can find it at their web site, which can be found at: <http://charleston.sc.lwv.org/issues.html>. It's listed under public health.

The other issue we will be addressing is to formulate our response to consensus questions on school governance. School governance is an umbrella term that addresses three issues:

- who decides the structure of school boards (number of members, single-member vs. at-large vs. some of each),
- who decides about consolidating or splitting school districts or redrawing school district lines, and
- who decides how much fiscal autonomy the school board has (whether they get to set their own mill rate and approve their own budget or not).

Right now we are only looking at the first two of those three issues, although the current answer to each question is “the legislative delegation.” The legislative delegation consists of state senators and representatives who represent some part of the county in which the school district is located, whether or not they live in that school district or even if that county. We need to decide whether to affirm that process or whether to support some alternative, including possible citizen referenda. The specific wording of the consensus questions will be available at the meeting. For background information on the issue of school governance, check the Strom Thurmond Institute's web site:

http://selfcenter.clemson.edu/pdf/School_District_Organization_and_Governance_in_SC.pdf.

There is also an ongoing state water study, but the consensus questions have not yet been formulated, so we will be addressing them at some future date. In the meantime, our November meeting will give us some insight into one of the interstate water issues that are part of that study, the conflict between Georgia and South Carolina over the waters of the Savannah River.

We will also briefly review other state and local positions, invite suggestions for other state studies, and suggest what should be state and local action priorities for the next year (or for the state, two years). So plan to be part of the democratic process within the League on January 11th that informs our delegates to the state convention later in the spring and shapes our democratic process of action and advocacy at the state level for the next two years.

~Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

Fill the GAP! SC Gubernatorial Appointments Project (SC GAP)

Today, only a few women serve in South Carolina Government as senior gubernatorial appointees and on boards and commissions. SC-GAP wants to help change that by encouraging capable women to submit their resumes as candidates for these positions.

Register today and tell your talented friends that we are looking for women who are ready, willing and able to serve. Visit www.scelectswomen.com/sc_gap for more information and to register.

The \$14,286 Tax Deduction: An Update on School Voucher Legislation

Each year, advocates for school vouchers introduce a bill into the state legislature. Recently, they have presented a different option: instead of advocating for a tax deduction, they are now proposing legislation that would offer a tax credit – both for home schooling and for independent (possibly, religious) schooling.

A \$1,000 South Carolina tax credit is equivalent to approximately \$14,286 as a SC tax deduction for taxpayers at the 7% level. Last year, several bills offered in the legislature would have given a \$1,000 SC tax credit for each child home-schooled. If three children were home-schooled, the tax deduction would be equivalent to a deduction of approximately \$42,857.

Nationally, 2 to 4% of children are home schooled. In South Carolina, that would be equivalent to 20,000 children. In the end, this would be equivalent to \$20 million in lost tax revenue that could be used for the public schools. In addition, the tax credit may encourage more home schooling, increasing the revenue loss. H. 3802 also includes a tax credit for tuition paid for a child to attend an independent school.

Both H. 3802 and S. 520, filed in the last legislative session, would give up to \$1000 per child tax credit for home-schooling. Senator Bryant was among the co-sponsors of S. 520. Representatives Haley, Bowen and Rice were among the 40 co-sponsors of H. 3802.

~ Submitted by Bill Hare and Holley Ulbrich