



THE VOTER

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Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area

Message from the Co-President

If you could snap your finger and do one thing to cure most of society's ills, what would you do? I bet many people would support campaign finance reform as a means of accomplishing this! This is an idea that has been around for a while. The SC Clean Elections Act was first introduced in 2001 – several years before the time of *Citizen's United*.



LWVCA was working on it back in 2006, 2007, 2008 when the focus was on “clean elections” or “voter-owned elections.” The late Senator Clementa Pinckney was a sponsor of the bill when he was trying to convince his legislative colleagues to reduce the time spent “dialing for dollars” and also to build a “better relationship with your constituents” by signing the Clean Election pledge.

Support of the League of Women Voters for campaign finance reform goes back much further than the SC Clean Elections Act. During the '70s the League was concerned about how the Watergate scandal demonstrated the effects of unchecked money in politics. Fast forward to 2015. We are still concerned about implementing campaign finance reform – and the impact of unchecked money on the public good. Consider many of the issues that the League of Women Voters is working on: drilling off the SC shore, failure to adopt Medicaid Expansion in SC, criminal justice, ethics reform/enforcement of ethics laws. Consider how different the landscape might be related to these issues, if our electoral system more closely resembled an election, rather than an auction.

In the upcoming year, Leagues across the country are going to be looking more closely at the issue of money's role in politics. I encourage you, regardless of your deeper concern, be it education, the environment, health care, juvenile justice, please join us as we begin this effort to better educate ourselves on the issue of campaign finance reform. See information on page 3, regarding the public meeting we are sponsoring on October 20. South Carolina has a high rate of uncontested elections – perhaps, if we could make inroads into campaign finance reform, we could encourage more people to run for office.

LWVUS Public Policy Position on Campaign Finance:

Improve methods of financing political campaigns in order to ensure the public's right to know, combat corruption and undue influence, enable candidates to compete more equitably for public office and promote citizen participation in the political process.

Janie Shipley

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voter Clemson Area
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Tues, Oct 6 **BOARD MEETING**, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, Clemson, 5:30 pm
 - Tues, Oct 20 New Member Orientation, OLLI, 6 pm
 - Tues, Oct 20 **OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING:** Campaign Finance Reform, OLLI, 7:15 pm
 - Tues, Nov 10 **BOARD MEETING**, 5:30 pm
- Refer to lwwclemsonarea.org for updates and current information**

LWVCA 2015 Calendar

Board Meetings – Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, 1011 Tiger Blvd., Suite 400, Clemson, 1st Tuesday, 5:30-6:45 p.m.; General Membership Meetings – Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, 100 Thomas Green Blvd. (578 Issaqueena Trail), 3rd Tuesdays, 7:15 pm (social), 7:30 pm (Program).

ALL DATES and TIMES are subject to change. Please refer to lwwclemsonarea.org for updates.

Aug 25	Women’s Equality Day/ New Member Welcome
Aug. 28	<i>VOTER</i> Deadline
Sept 1	Board Meeting, 107 N Fairplay Street, Seneca, 5:30 pm
Sept 15	General Meeting with Local Legislators, OLLI, 7:15 pm,
Sept 22	National Voter Registration Day (local event on campus of Clemson Univ.)
Sept 25	<i>VOTER</i> deadline
Oct 3	Voter Registration deadline for Nov 3, 2015 municipal elections
Oct 6	Board Meeting, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, 5:30 pm
Oct 20	New Member Orientation, OLLI, 6:00 pm
Oct 20	General Meeting: Campaign Finance Reform, OLLI, 7:15 pm
Oct. 23	<i>VOTER</i> deadline
Nov 3	Municipal Elections
Nov 3	Board Meeting, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, 5:30 pm
Nov 17	General Meeting: On Water, OLLI, 7:15 pm
Nov 20	<i>VOTER</i> deadline
Dec 1	Board Meeting, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, 5:30 pm
Dec 15	Holiday Party, details to be announced
Jan	Pickens County Legislative Delegation meeting
Jan	Oconee County Legislative Delegation meeting
Jan 5	Board Meeting, Foothills Community Healthcare Boardroom, 5:30 pm
Jan 19	General Meeting, OLLI, 7:15 pm Money in Politics Consensus meeting
Jan 22	<i>VOTER</i> deadline
Jan 23/24	Program Planning Meeting
Jan 30	LEAD (League Education and ADvocacy Day) in Columbia

Publicity Needs Your Feedback! Whenever you hear about the LWVCA in the media, please contact our Publicity Chair, Elaine Laiewski, to tell her about it. She needs to know when her publicity requests are filled. Additionally, she would also like to fine-tune her publicity efforts to media that members use and has learned that sometimes you have to be a subscriber to publicize. Can you be her eyes and ears? She can be reached at lski139@gmail.com.

October 20: Money and Politics

It's always a challenge and an opportunity for our League to participate in a state or national consensus to develop a national position on which we can advocate. To kick-start that process, Cheryl Lee, Patty Warner and Holley Ulbrich will present background information on the national League issue of Money in Politics, which is very timely in the midst of a long and expensive presidential campaign. We will be addressing the consensus questions in January.

The two focus areas for this issue are campaign finance reform in the light of the *Citizens United* decision by the Supreme Court ("Money is a form of speech") and the related question of amending the constitution to overturn that decision. A great program for political junkies, and an important one for the future of the electoral process! Watch also for an article in the SC Voter this month that provides some background on this issue and the consensus process.

Submitted by Holley Ulbrich

November: Water

Looking ahead, Katie Buckley Giacalone, of the Clemson University Carolina Clear Program and Director of the Center for Watershed Excellence, will present a program on water quality for the November 17th meeting. Her background includes monitoring, microbial source tracking, watershed restoration and storm water outreach.

Submitted by Sandra Gray

New Member Orientation

New members are being invited to an orientation session on Tuesday, October 20 at 6:00 p.m. prior to the monthly meeting at OLLI. New members will learn more about LWVCA – the League process, programs, and activities. This is also an opportunity for us to learn more about new members and their interests.

Submitted by Paula Appling

Foothills Community Healthcare, FQHC, Offers Affordable Primary Care to the Golden Corner

For 50 years Federally Qualified Grant Funded Health Centers (FQHC) have brought affordable care to medically underserved areas. As grantees under the Health Center Program, as authorized by Section 330 of the Public Health Service Act, FQHCs across the county are able to provide care for 22 million Americans. What makes an FQHC different is that it offers a sliding fee scale, provides comprehensive services, has an ongoing quality assurance program, and has a community based governing board of directors with 51% consumer representation. Most importantly, while FQHCs accept all insurances and self-pay patients, they will not deny healthcare to any patient based on inability to pay. Foothills Community Healthcare is an FQHC here in the Upstate that is proud to offer a broad range of services including primary care with two board-certified physicians, behavioral health, and pediatric care. The mission of Foothills Community Health Care is “to provide a comprehensive and compassionate medical home that offers affordable, high-quality primary and preventive care for individuals and families.” Located on the Cat Bus Route at 1011 Tiger Blvd Suite 400, Clemson, SC 29631, Foothills seeks to serve residents of the Golden Corner with continuity of care in a patient-centered environment and aspires to become the preeminent provider of health and wellness services to residents of the Golden Corner of South Carolina’s Upstate. To schedule a visit or inquire about services offered, please call (864) 722-0260 or visit their website at www.myfchc.org.

Submitted by Nicole Paluzzi

Review: Meeting with Local Legislators in September

Senators Thomas Alexander and Larry Martin and Representatives Gary Clary and Neal Collins attended our September 15 annual meeting with our local legislators. They were all thoughtful in their answers and comments; Representative Collins later tweeted:

“Enjoyed the League of Women Voters' forum tonight with Senators Alexander and Martin and Representative Gary Clary. I don't think the crowd and I agreed on some fiscal issues, but we did have common ground on a number of other issues. And, I love that they are educated, interested and involved in government.”

Holley Ulbrich, the meeting's moderator, kicked off the program by thanking them for taking down the flag and asking how they would spend the state budget surplus. Surprisingly, they didn't say roads, but mentioned trying to get back up to speed on some state responsibilities--staffing DSS, funding education, mental health. When asked what their number one issue is for next year, they replied ROADS - all four agreed. They also expressed support for increased gas taxes because this ongoing expense needs a reliable, ongoing source of funds.

Responding to a question from Frances Plotnik, they also made a point of saying they would like to see League members at the Delegation meeting; **THEY ASKED ALL 30 OF US IN ATTENDANCE TO PROMISE TO COME!**

Janet Marsh made the point that “big government” may not be the appropriate term to refer to raising taxes for an increase in the state budget if the increase is for services that benefit citizens. She said we need government and budget that does that. Her husband Ken stated that we would (probably) all prefer to pay a little more in taxes to have a well-educated population living around us.

Senator Alexander and Representative Clary both expressed support of having bike lanes, as long as minimal extra costs were incurred.

Regarding the conflict in the Pickens County Council over adequate funding for the election commission for next year's elections, we learned that county council blames everything on the legislature because of aid to subdivisions being cut from 4.5% to 4%. Senator Martin pointed out that all the counties were treated the same and that Pickens County was the only one that had a gripe.

The House members were proud of their work on ethics, and the Senators were apologetic for not being able to get their bills through but plan to try again.

The panel had opportunity to make short closing statements and all expressed appreciation for the League's helpfulness and support.

Compiled by Paula Appling



At the September 2015 meeting: Legislative Delegation Panel members (l to r): Senator Thomas Alexander, Senator Larry Martin, Moderator Holley Ulbrich, Representative Gary Clary and Representative Neal Collins.

Welcome New Members!

Ann Ratliff Russell is a native Texan who came to Clemson in 1967 to teach in the History Department. She has also worked as a Public Information Specialist for the University's historic houses, Fort Hill and Hanover. She is the author of "Legacy of a Southern Lady, Anna Calhoun Clemson, 1817-1875" and has contributed chapters to other publications.

Sarah McNeill came to Clemson recently from northern Illinois to live near her son who is a chemistry professor at Clemson. She was recently widowed and thinks that Clemson is a great place to retire and still make a difference in the world. Sarah has not been involved with the League until now, but in her previous life she served for nearly 18 years on the Whiteside County Illinois Board (equivalent to the county council) and was active in politics. She was an x-ray tech, ultrasonographer and then a manager of a hospital diagnostic imaging department for 35 years.

Her interests include social justice issues and healthcare; she admits to being a political junkie. In her first month in the League she has served as timer for our legislative delegation meeting, attended several meetings of public bodies, and addressed the County Council on the issue of funding elections.

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Blue Future is third in a trilogy of books (**Blue Covenant** and **Blue Gold**) written by Maude Barlow that addresses the current international water crisis. She weaves together personal stories about individual and grass-roots movements, ecological catastrophes in the making, corporations and nations. This final book in her trilogy on water-justice provides hope for the future and is definitely worth the read for anyone interested in preserving our planet.

Submitted by Sandra Gray

Matt Saltzman moved to Clemson in the summer of 1989, to join the Mathematical Sciences faculty at Clemson. He works in the area of Operations Research, which has a lot of policy applications. Matt joined the League because following politics and policy is a hobby of his, and it's a challenge to find like-minded people to engage with. Too, his mother has been an active League member for a long time. He has been a sideline participant over the last few years and finally decided to join. The issues that particularly interest him are technology and its impact on policy in elections, environment, education, and economics; health care; privacy, security, and intellectual property.

Heather Cumbie works at Clemson Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation. She attended Clemson University and graduated from Russell Sage College in Troy, NY with a degree in Physical Therapy. She is married to Benji and they have two children, Quint (8) and Braelin (7). She is active in Rotary and Mt. Zion United Methodist Church.

She is interested in the League because her mom was involved in the LWV and she feels it is important for all individuals to have a say in their government.

more Observer Corps ...

Pickens County Board of Registration & Elections, September 1, 2015

There has been no change on the budget issue. (See "League Requests Assistance..." on page 7.) Elections board members have spoken with county council members to no avail. The following cities will have municipal elections in November: Easley, Liberty, Norris, Pickens and Six Mile. The next meeting of the Board of Registration and Elections is Oct. 13th.

Submitted by Sarah McNeill

Book Summary: *BLUE FUTURE Protecting Water for People and the Planet Forever* By Maude Barlow

“Water, water everywhere/Nor a drop to drink,” a well-known quote from the Samuel Coleridge’s poem, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner,” could rightly be used to describe author Maude Barlow’s prediction for the future of Earth’s fresh water supply. Barlow is a tireless water activist who served as Senior Advisor on Water to the 63rd President of the United Nations General Assembly, serves as Chairperson for the citizen’s advocacy group Council of Canadians, co-founded The Blue Planet Project and knows her facts about the condition of water supplies all around the world. Her book outlines four principles drawn from her vast experience and keen insight that can be used to create a “water-secure and water-just world.”

Principle 1 states WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT. While an advisor to the UN in 2010, Barlow worked to have the UN recognize access to fresh water and sanitation as a human right for all people. Currently, the UN estimates 800 million people lack access to clean water, and over 2.5 billion people have no access to personal sanitation facilities. She outlines the struggles countries throughout the world face to assure their residents have a sufficient water supply. China, for example, may soon have a scarcity of clean water to meet the needs of its population. China’s second largest river, Yellow River, is so diminished that its flow is often just a trickle by the time it reaches the Yellow Sea. Worldwide, our wasteful modern industrial agricultural practices currently use up to 90% of the water withdrawn from rivers and aquifers. These practices deplete fresh water for human consumption.

Principle 2 states that WATER IS A COMMON HERITAGE AND PUBLIC TRUST. Barlow says that water must be “protected, conserved and managed” for the good of all. It is a “common” commodity that belongs to all, not a source of water for commercialization. She describes how some large international corporations pollute local water sources, while others try to privatize and commodify water. Our energy policies impact water resources; large quantities of water are used for coal-powered electricity production, biofuel production, fracking and nuclear energy production. Referring again to China, the author says the water crisis there can be traced to the country’s large coal plants where approximately 50% of the world’s coal powered energy is produced. Barlow points out that biofuels (corn produced ethanol) threaten food security, have a massive water footprint and an unfavorable carbon footprint. Loss of “water commons” in countries such as India, Nigeria, Chile and some European countries has demonstrated how turning over the management of a country’s water to outside entities results in profiteering and water shortages. Nevertheless, grassroots communities are now uniting in areas of Latin America, Europe, Canada and the US to picket and fight against privatization, demand water-justice and conservation of their water sources.

Principle 3 states WATER HAS RIGHTS TOO. Barlow describes how water is not just for our human use but belongs to the whole earth and other species as well. It is our responsibility to create laws that are compatible with the laws of nature. Careless pumping of ancient fossil water from aquifers for agriculture or building dams on rivers to produce electricity changes ecosystems and contaminates potential drinking water. Our relationship with nature is perverted when we fail to recognize the right of a river to freely flow or when we engage in water related issues that destabilize the Earth’s climate. We must recognize the right to a healthy environment by protecting our water. Instead, daily, almost 2 million tons of sewage, industrial and agricultural waste are discharged into the world’s water.

Principle 4 states WATER CAN TEACH US HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER. Our current problems with water supply are a source of disputes between nations, public and private entities, rich and poor. It seems large corporations write the rules for trade and are buying up large tracts of land and their water rights. In order to prevent a water collapse, Barlow suggests that trade laws must be reformed and land grabs by large corporations ended. Instead, human rights must be put before corporate rights. Trade industries must consider questions such as how much water was consumed or polluted to make that product and whether the water consumed could have been used for a purpose with higher social benefit. She reminds us that modern large-scale agriculture, which devastates so much water, has existed for only 100 years. We must shift to a system of local, organic and sustainable farming to preserve water for the Earth and its people. While disputes and conflicts arise over access to scarce water resources, we can use these tensions to foster cooperation and interdependence between nations. Conservation groups are working to ensure that watershed equity is maintained in areas of conflict. The current international movement to protect water for all people and the planet is a call for water-justice for all.

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League Requests Assistance of SC Attorney General

On Tuesday, September 22, the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area sent a letter¹ to Attorney General Alan Wilson, requesting that he examine the funding of elections in Pickens County in order to ensure that Pickens County will hold all elections scheduled for fiscal 2015-16. Copies were sent to the Pickens County Council, the Pickens County Board of Registration & Elections, the SC State Elections Commission, Senator Lindsey Graham, Senator Tim Scott, and the U. S. Department of Justice.

In June, in response to requests to provide adequate funding for temporary workers and overtime for the staff of Pickens County Board of Registration & Elections (Board), the Pickens County Council (Council) told the audience that it is the state's responsibility to provide the necessary funding for elections. The level of funding required by the Board has not been questioned. The dispute is about whether the county or the state should provide the funding.

Council has not acted to address the funding problem, and the Board expects to run out of funds by the end of February. The Board is not permitted to spend funds beyond the appropriation from Council and will not be able to hold some statewide elections without additional funding.

We are addressing our concerns to the South Carolina Attorney General because (1) the Attorney General provided an opinion² on a funding dispute between the Board and the Council last year and (2) this problem appears to require state-level intervention.

Our Observer Corps was instrumental in discovering the funding problem, monitoring the groups involved, and developing our response. Many thanks to our observers: Sarah McNeill, Charlotte Holmes, Janie Shipley, Aleta Robinson, Frances Plotnik, Diana Stafford, Mike Stafford, Bill Hare and Eleanor Hare.

¹ <http://clemsonarea-members.sc.lwvnet.org/files/SCAttorneyGeneral.pdf>

² <http://www.scag.gov/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Martin-L-Signed-Opinion-by-R.-Cook-6-30-2014-00366714xD2C78.pdf>

Clemson City Council Meeting Highlights, September 21, 2015, 6:30-7:30 pm

- Raising backyard chickens and hobby beekeeping are now legal in Clemson city limits.
- October is diversity month and Clemson University has a number of events that will be of interest to the community. Clemson City Council approved \$3,000 for live streaming of the October 28th keynote speaker's address over the City of Clemson's website so everyone can hear his remarks on diversity.
- City Council voted to give \$25,000 for Clemson Community Foundation in support of its initial fundraising campaign.
- Since the two city engineers have more work than they can do, the council endorsed the utilization of an Indefinite Delivery Contract for engineering services. The city will bid out small projects (\$2,000-\$3,000) to two firms yet to be selected that are within a 2-hour drive of the city.
- City Council approved the expenditure of \$6,492 to comply with an unfunded mandate by the South Carolina General Assembly requiring city governments to pay for indigent defense services in Municipal Court in addition to the assessments that are already collected.
- Rick Cotton has negotiated with Campus Partners, developers of the Earle Street Apartment project, for 40 public parking spaces and a 50-year lease. Council will vote on the proposal at a later meeting.
- New Child Care services are being considered for the patrons of the Central-Clemson Indoor Recreation Center. The former Senior Center has been leased from Pickens County for \$1 per year and has been renovated. Reservations can be made online on a fee basis for a 90 minutes period of child care. Children must be potty trained, and parents must provide any food they want their child to consume.
- Council approved the request from Friends of Pickens County Guardian ad Litem to display a banner in Flag Plaza from Oct 10 – Oct 24. The group will hold an oyster roast fund raiser October 24 from 5:30–8:30 pm.

Submitted by Linda Gahan

More Observer Corps on page 5 ...

Clemson City Council 1st and 3rd Monday, 7:30 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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