



SC Voter

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Summer 2014

Lessons From My First

NATIONAL CONVENTION

By Julie Hussey,
LWV Charleston Area, President



Barbara Zia, JoAnne Day, Julie Sellers and Yvette from Ohio.



Fran Holt and Julie Hussey are all smiles at the convention banquet.



Wade Goodwyn poses with LWV South Carolina at the convention banquet. Wade, NPR National Desk Correspondent covering Texas and the surrounding states, spoke on the state of democracy in Texas and the nation.

LESSON ONE: Including the LWV National Convention in our local League budget allowed me the wonderful opportunity to connect local League work with efforts being made around the country.

In much the same way state League events such as the annual State convention, League Council or League Education and Advocacy Day connect local Leagues to statewide efforts, the National League Convention (held in even years) makes certain that we can appreciate challenges and opportunities at the national level. I am so grateful LWVCA members included the LWVUS convention in our budget. Thanks to the contributions of one of our members, who feels so strongly about the national convention, we were also able to send a second voting delegate. Having Nancy Finch, our Administrative VP, not only

made certain that I had a great roommate, but gave us the chance to share ideas with each other not only about the convention but also about how we could use these ideas back in Charleston.

LESSON TWO: While the accommodations were luxurious, National Conventions are not a vacation.

The hotel beds were very comfortable, which was great since the convention included meetings from 7:30 am to 10:30 pm. With programs ranging from how-to sessions on the League website, experience sharing sessions such as the voter registration panel I was on or lessons

LESSONS: continued on page 3 –

Highlights:

- National Convention 1, 3, 4 & 12
- Co-Presidents' Message 2
- Important League Dates 2
- General Assembly Action 5 & 6
- Voter Protection Grant 7
- League Members Opinions 8
- Youth Voter Registration Project 9
- Health Care For All 9
- Earth Day 10
- Know Your State 11



Co-Presidents' Perspectives:

When you attend a League of Women Voters national convention you realize what a really remarkable organization it is. Hearing inspirational stories from leaders across the United States, such as our fellow New Jersey Leaguers, rallying one week after Hurricane Sandy hit their state, to help ensure citizens displaced by the storm could still exercise their right to vote. Some 800 polling places throughout their state were without power after the storm. They created a documentary about this event called **"Storming for the Vote: Hurricane Sandy and the Election."**

This was certainly a massive and dramatic event, but there were stories such as this from every state of our union, of League members across the country going the extra mile to advance the right of voters and open up the democratic process.

We have a real opportunity this coming election to educate and advocate for voters at the grass roots level using our Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PVAP) grant from the national League. We have the opportunity for every local League to partner with other community groups to provide information and education on voting rights, encourage citizens to become poll workers and managers and

encourage diversity among those working at the polls. We know that there is still much confusion for our citizens regarding the new photo id law. The election this November will be the first major election when this law is in force and we need an informed and engaged electorate. Another goal of the PVAP grant is to form a robust and permanent coalition of community groups involved in advancing voter education, voter participation and voter rights. We need to be proactive in advocating for increased access and convenience in the registration and election process.

It also bears repeating that the League is one of the few civic groups in the United States that is dedicated to voter rights and the perfection of the democratic process. If our democratic processes are broken then we will have policies that do not benefit the majority of Americans. Voter suppression, secret PAC's, gerrymandering, all undermine public confidence in government. Our League's efforts for the past two years on ethics reform exemplify our efforts to promote honest, accountable and transparent governance. Judicial selection system reform, another of the League's signature



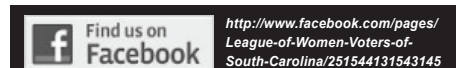
JoAnne Day
Co-President, LWVSC

efforts over the past few years is another example of an initiative to improve the underlying structure of government. If the foundation of any structure is rotten, the structure will eventually fail. We will continue to work toward a strong and fair foundation for our governing processes. Without that, the issues we care about will not see the light of day.

League Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) has been changed from September 6, 2014 to January 31, 2015.

The Board decision was made because the November election is only a few months away and state and local leagues will be spending a great deal of time on voter registration and education activities. Having LEAD day in January will allow time to plan an informative and high quality program and provide League members the opportunity to recharge after the election and the holidays.

IMPORTANT LEAGUE DATES:



August

26th Tuesday, *Women's Equality Day*

** Any member of the LWV of South Carolina is welcome to attend LWVSC Board meetings.*

September

6th Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., *LWVSC Board Meeting, Grecian Gardens, 2312 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia, 29169*

23rd Tuesday, *National Voter Registration Day*
(nationalvoterregistrationday.org)

LESSONS:

continued from page 1 –

about addressing global warming, to caucuses for positions seeking national consensus such as human trafficking, there was something for everyone. When making my schedule for the next convention, I will worry less about my Friday arrival time and worry more about my Tuesday departure time since a lot of key decisions are made during the last plenary session.



LWV Charleston Area President Julie Hussey gives delegates a warm, humorous welcome from South Carolina.

ask personal questions, and there was a candidate debate with submitted questions from the audience expertly moderated by the president of the Texas League.

The vote occurred on Monday afternoon. We signed in next to our original signature registering as a voting delegate to assure each vote was properly counted. Paper ballots were placed into a voting box. The results were tabulated and presented on a bulletin board just before the banquet that night. Elizabeth MacNamara won with a substantial majority, but the real winner was the League. Dying or stagnant organizations desperately seek people to lead them, thriving organizations have multiple leaders challenging them to be their best.



SC's convention delegation enjoys an evening out at one of Dallas' great restaurants.



There were almost 650 unique voting delegates who were different from me in many ways, but who all shared a common committment to their communities and the world around them. WOW!



LESSON THREE:

One red card can stop the show.

Pay attention during the introduction and briefing by the Parliamentarian. There is nothing like a National convention to see the consensus process in action. The voting delegates sat in the front 3/4 of the room. You do not have to sit by state delegation but it was great to be with each other. The process is very deliberative and while there were many items with unanimous agreement, there were also moments of debate, amendments, and voting card votes on others. Breaks were worked through and several guest speakers

were rushed, but it was grassroots democracy in action and was wonderful to witness. President MacNamara was clearly our capable meeting facilitator but it was so egalitarian, that anyone with a red card at a microphone could stop everything with a comment or question about the process, of course I didn't dare.

LESSON FOUR:

The League's appreciation of voting rights and elections is especially valuable when there is a challenge to the slate.

The decision by Deidre McNab, the President of the LWV of Florida, to challenge the slate's recommendation of Elizabeth MacNamara for LWVUS President made this an especially interesting convention. It was only the third time in LWV history that the slate was challenged. Deidre ran a competitive campaign with on-line chats before the convention, videos, and e-mails. Campaigning at the event included buttons, scarves, and one-one one requests for your vote. Meet and greets with each candidate offered the opportunity to



Members of Young Leaders Task Force present strategies to diversify the League.

LESSON FIVE: *You may come with some friends but you leave with even more and it is funny how traveling to Texas is a great way to get to know League members across SC.*

When I mentioned to a friend that I was heading to convention but had no idea what to expect, she said "It will be great. You will be in a room with hundreds of people just like you from across the country." She was right. There were almost 650 unique voting delegates who were different from me in many ways, but who all shared a common commitment to their communities and the world around them. WOW!

I will confess that I did not attend as many caucuses or leadership meetings as I thought I would – although the Young People's Task Force caucus was awesome and a great reminder of the need for League's to attract a diversity of ages and

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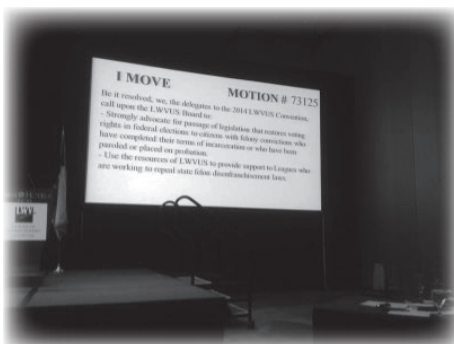
LWV Columbia Area delegate Julie Sellers at LWVUS National Convention

LESSONS:

continued from page 3 –

perspectives. But I did take advantage of different opportunities to get to know the SC delegation and that was an unexpected, amazing gift.

A walk to get some wine and snacks with JoAnne Day not only made certain the SC contingent would have a simple gathering in her room to socialize and watch the Belmont Stakes, but also gave me the chance to be even more grateful LWVSC has her as one of our co-presidents. Peggy Appler's national board experience helped us have a connection to their decisions and thought processes which many state's do not have - with the election of Barbara Zia to join her on national board, I feel confident we will soon be the home state of a LWV President. Running into Hilton Head/Bluffton Area member Fran Holt at the Atlanta airport on



Delegates passed a resolution calling on LWV to advocate for restoration of voting rights of ex-felons.

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**In much the same way
state League events
such as the annual State
Convention connect local
Leagues to statewide
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that we can appreciate
challenges
and opportunities
at the national level.**

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Julie Hussey, Linda Gahan and Joanne Day take a break from League business.



LWV Charleston president Julie Hussey gave a humorous take on SC government in the roll call of states.

my way to Dallas was a trip highlight and confirmed that this would be a weekend to meet amazing women. Dee Woodward from Sumter is an inspiration. Columbia's Julie Sellers's smiles are contagious. Talking late into the night with Nancy Finch is worth the loss of sleep, and Linda Gahan's willingness to walk across Dallas with me will never be forgotten.

LESSON SIX: Once you have attended a national convention, you know that you will be back.

I cannot say for certain if I will be able to attend the 2016 convention in Washington, DC, but I can say I hope this wasn't my last convention. Whether I am there or not, I will be following the proceedings through Facebook postings or Twitter hashtags. A gathering of almost 1000 League members is simply too wonderful to miss.



Texas and US election officials Ann McGeehan and Ray Martinez present on voting rights and election administration issues.

General Assembly Action (or Inaction)

By Lynn Shuler Teague, LWVSC Vice President, Issues and Action

Thursday, June 19, marked the last day of the second year of the 120th General Assembly of South Carolina. It was not a day for celebration for those concerned about integrity, transparency, and accountability in South Carolina's government. I will begin with the good news about a bill that passed, regarding elections, and good news about some that did not pass, before moving on to the major loss on ethics reform.

ELECTIONS

South Carolina has suffered from a General Assembly that has been willing to combine county voter registration and election boards through single-county bills, which is unconstitutional. Following a court challenge, it became clear that something had to be done to permit the majority of our counties to hold legal elections. It has also become clear that stronger oversight of county offices was needed at the state level, to deal with some counties (especially Richland) where cronyism and incompetence have threatened the integrity of the vote.

At the very end of the session, the General Assembly responded to these problems with a bill that amends Title 7 if the Code to combine all county voter registration and election boards, and will give the SC Election Commission enhanced ability to train, audit, and correct elections problems.

VOTING

The League was concerned that attempts to require proof of citizenship or establish limited no excuse early voting at the expense of major losses in absentee voting availability would pass. Fortunately, these bills died. The League continues to support the concept of no-excuse early voting, which has benefits for both voters and elections offices. However, the price can be too high, and would have been in this session.

ETHICS

H.3945, a bill that would have provided much improved disclosure of officials' income and campaign finances, was filibustered at the last possible moment by Senator Tom Davis, with the help of Senator Kevin Bryant's filibuster of the preceding bill. Senator Lee Bright was standing by to add to the talkathon if needed. TEA partiers and Democrats joined to prevent ending the filibuster and deny H.3945 an up or down vote. The bill died forever at 5:00 PM. Some argued that it



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should die because it was too weak. These arguments were conspicuously popular among those who made no significant effort to pass either this bill or a stronger one.

Senator Bright has at least been consistent in his position on this bill. He didn't vote for the bill before. It has long been clear that he doesn't want reform because it would require that so-called "independent" PACs that advocate for or against candidates in an election would have to disclose donors. Senator Bright defined this as a free speech issue. It is not.

Contrary to Bright and to last-minute claims by Ashley Landess of the South Carolina Policy Council (SCPC), groups that only provide objective information on candidates – like the League of Women Voters – have nothing to fear from this provision, which was drafted to conform to a ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court and parallels successful reforms in other states. The League strongly supported this aspect of the bill, confident that its longstanding practice of providing objective and unbiased candidate information to voters was not threatened. In fact, this provision of the bill is an essential reform for South Carolina. Now, without passage of H.3945, we return South Carolina elections to the condition that national good government groups have referred to as "the Wild West" -- there is no law east of the Savannah, at least none that prohibits supposedly issue-oriented groups with anonymous donors from attacking and supporting candidates from the shadows. Ethics reform must include this provision.

Landess also made belated objection to other provisions of the bill. For example, she claims that it greatly expanded the ability of officials to use campaign funds for "office related expenses." This is not true; the bill codified existing practice. Current practices might be unfortunate, but it is unlikely that greater restriction will pass the General Assembly. John Crangle of Common Cause has argued that all "office related" uses of campaign funds must be prohibited. However, this simply will not happen. Instead, we can more clearly define those uses, as H.3945 did, to avoid future claims that sex toys, SUVs, and household mortgages are permitted within the law.

There also are those who didn't object to what is in the bill, but to what is not. For example, Senator Vincent Sheheen said that without disclosure of all income amounts, the bill should not pass. The

GENERAL ASSEMBLY: *continued on page 6 –*



GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

continued from page 5 –

senator offered an amendment to that effect in February, as Senate debate on the bill drew to a close, but it was not adopted. It is unlikely that he thought that it would be. Disclosure of all income amounts is unlikely to pass either house of the General Assembly. Legislators are quick to remind us that they are part-time public officials and must earn a living outside the institution. The bottom line – if we can't have ethics reform without requiring disclosure of all income amounts, we may never have ethics reform. We should continue to work for disclosure of amounts for specific kinds of income (income from lobbyist principals, regulated organizations, and government contracts) but even the recommendations of the South Carolina Commission on Ethics Reform (the McMaster-Medlock Commission) noted that full disclosure of amounts was unrealistic and unnecessary.

Senator Tom Davis argued on the floor of the Senate that this bill should not pass without independent investigation. This is certainly an important aspect of reform, probably the most important. However, Senator Davis knows that earlier this year the Senate rejected all attempts to include such a provision, after weeks of negotiation. At that time he did not take to the floor to argue that the bill should not pass without independent investigation. He voted for the bill. There was simply no point in second-guessing this aspect of the final conference committee report last week, when it was all over but the shouting. It has been clear for some time that this issue must be addressed separately from the disclosure issues that are the substance of H.3945.

Next year, the effort to reform ethics law will simply have to start over. We must hope that the current array of serious ethics problems at every level of South Carolina's government is enough to keep the reform effort moving in the future.

Before leaving this topic, it is worthwhile to touch on the case of House Speaker Bobby Harrell, who has been

accused of ethics violations. He has been under investigation by the State Grand Jury following a request by both Attorney General Alan Wilson and SLED Director Mark Keel, based on their assessment that there was sufficient evidence of criminal violations to proceed to that step. Harrell's attorneys had argued that the AG has no jurisdiction until the case goes to the House of Representatives Ethics Committee and in addition that AG Wilson is biased against Harrell and should be removed.

The League has no position on individual cases like that of Harrell, since we have no access to the evidence in the case. However, we are very interested in the implications of this case for the ability of the Attorney General to exercise his constitutional obligation to pursue criminal violations on behalf of the people of South Carolina. Since the General Assembly has so far rejected change in their inadequate system of investigation, the independently elected Attorney General, the State Law Enforcement Division, and the State Grand Jury are by far our most important line of defense against corruption in the legislative branch, as well as other branches of government.

The Supreme Court has now ruled in favor of Attorney General Wilson, or rather in favor of the Constitution of our state and of its citizens. Their decision states that the role of the legislative committees is comparable to that of the Bar Association or other professional organizations that handle professional licensing requirements and discipline their members when they fall short of professional standards. Their deliberations are not part of the process of criminal investigation and prosecution. In practice, the legislative committees have been used as a first step in addressing criminal cases. This is the most important element that must change to bring about a trustworthy system of investigation and enforcement, and one more in line with the Constitution. There has never been any reason to doubt that the legislative ethics committees can handle issues of late disclosure reports. On the other hand, there has never been

any reason to believe that they are capable of addressing serious criminal violations such as solicitation of bribes.

In another issue related to government accountability and transparency, the League must also address a recent ruling by the SC Supreme Court that agencies of state and local government are not required to provide accurate agendas prior to their meetings. This decision makes citizen participation in public hearings and meetings far more difficult and limits government transparency. The SC Press Association is committed to working to correct this situation in the next legislative session, and the League should be a partner in that effort.

Overall, there have been appalling failures of integrity and public accountability at every level of our government in South Carolina. These point toward the need for energetic League advocacy in support of legislative action on ethics reform, on judicial independence, on citizen access to information, and on other related issues.

ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Detailed coverage of these issues is best left to the organizations that have taken the lead in advocacy on women's reproductive health issues, education, and the environment. We will simply note here that some very unfortunate bills that would have created draconian restrictions not just on abortion but on birth control and in vitro fertilization were defeated.

However, South Carolina continues to offer residents no expanded Medicaid opportunities, despite our tax dollars paying for this expansion in other states.

Attacks on Common Core were also a feature of this session. Opposition appears to have funding, as suggested by robo calls in some areas identifying the standards as "unchristian." We remain perplexed by the concept of "unchristian" mathematics.

The League will continue to partner with organizations that specialize in these areas, and we are already in discussions on moving forward in the next session on health care issues.



LWVSC Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Grant

By Paula Egelson, LWVSC Vice President, Voters Service/Citizen Education

In early 2014, the League of Women Voter of South Carolina (LWVSC) submitted a grant proposal to the LWV education fund's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection (PAVP) project VIII. In early spring, LWVSC learned that they had been awarded an \$11,000 grant. This grant will be in effect until March 15, 2015.

These are the voter protection issues that the PAVP grant will address:

- Increase access to voter registration opportunities including compliance with the National Voter Registration Act, specifically opportunities at public assistance agencies
- Improve polling place management
- Improve poll worker training and recruitment to help diversify the Election Day workforce
- Respond to and mitigate last minute barriers to voting

Specifically the activities associated with this PAVP grant will include:

- 1.) Increasing voter registration, education, engagement and protection by building a statewide voter advocacy network/database dedicated to voter registration, protection and election reform issues. This network can grow into a permanent coalition. South Carolina currently lacks a robust and organized statewide coalition of voting rights advocates.
- 2.) Building and expanding upon already existing community relationships and developing a database and network of

organizations and contact persons for voter education and advocacy throughout the state.

- 3.) Engaging state and county election officials as partners in effort to achieve project goals of improving polling place management, poll worker training and recruitment to help diversify the Election Day workforce, administration of statewide database systems, and implementation of permanent and portable statewide voter registration.
- 4.) Creating and maintaining a phone network with community voting advocates (e.g., regular conference calls to discuss voting issues at state and local levels).
- 5.) Developing community voting networks to monitor election activities and be alert for last minute barriers to voting (e.g., preventing registered students from voting; lack of absentee ballots).
- 6.) Continuing to provide LWVSC phone as election hotline providing information to voters on and around general election day. We will continue to partner with Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and other partners as we have done in past general elections.
- 7.) Providing trainings in partnership with Leagues in proximity of counties where there are currently no local Leagues, as well as in areas with local Leagues. From these trainings we will develop cohorts of community based voting advocates who will monitor elections and voting administration in their areas, including observing county election

commissions, implementation of photo ID law, and local barriers to voting. Workshop topics will include election reform issues, voting rules, proper polling place management, and recruitment of a diverse Election Day workforce.

- 8.) Improving and expanding our existing webpage devoted to voter protection and information.
- 9.) Continuing to grow our existing Voter Education and Protection toolkit (e.g. PowerPoint presentation, informational handouts, videos.) We will also expand use of traditional media, such as radio and print, and new pathways to communicate with citizens such as Twitter, YouTube videos and other new media.
- 10.) Leveraging informational materials from the State Election Commission, whose officials view our organization as an honest broker and ally and will provide voting information and handouts.
- 11.) Continuing to provide, advertise and seek out opportunities in community groups for the League to speak and educate on voting issues.

LWVSC members JoAnne Day, Barbara Zia, Liz Rennick and Paula Egelson serve on a team to implement the PAVP grant activities. The kickoff activity for the PAVP grant will be a voter advocacy networking meeting for interested organizations across the state on August 8th in Columbia at the AARP office from 11:45 am to 1:30 pm. **Please contact JoAnne, Barbara, Liz or Paula for more information about this event.**



League Members Voice Their Opinion

Passion about issues they care about is a hallmark of League members. Members are encouraged to share their opinions as citizens and we are all proud when we see the thoughts and concerns on an issue written by a League friend and published in the newspaper.

Below are two letters written 50 years apart but both expressing grave concern on important issues.

LETTER TO THE ROCK HILL HERALD EDITOR FROM BILL BARRON, June 1964

Long time League members and leader Keller Barron married Bill Barron 30 years ago and soon after, he too became an active Columbia Area League member. Sadly, Bill passed away this past April at the age of 88 and he will be truly missed by all.

Keller Barron wanted to share a letter Bill wrote to the editor of the Rock Hill Herald in June 1964, concerning how much a vote is worth. The letter, which the newspaper refused to publish, comments on an issue that is still quite relevant fifty years later. Below are Bill's words – with a few edits for clarity:

“As an individual interested in the ‘way of life’ of our times and area, I have become very concerned about the cost of elections. I believe that the right to vote

is a privilege and opportunity that we should value highly. It made me feel proud and patriotic when I hitchhiked home from college to vote in the first election that I was qualified to vote in following the Second World War. I still feel that way when I vote, but are we setting a good example for our youth and others in the way we permit flagrant abuse of this privilege? Is it necessary for a good man to buy votes to get elected?”

“You may be interested, or disturbed as I was, in some conclusions drawn from our most recent [congressional] election. The [district] vote in Chesterfield County was listed as 1,959 to 651. Upon closer observation, 29 of the 31 [precinct ballot] boxes favored one candidate.

[Vote margins] were all either close or extremely strong in favor of the winner, with extremes of 159 to 0 (Ousleydale), 257 to 9 (Patrick), and 43 to 1 (Cat Pond). In discussing this with local people, I have become convinced that this number of votes was greater than the number of individuals actually voting in many of these small communities and that a few dollars probably would have changed the totals. This kind of thing doesn't just happen, it has to be planned and paid for.”

“How much is my vote worth against such odds? Of course, more important is the question: Are we willing to tolerate such practices?”

Sincerely, William B. Barron

LETTER TO THE EDITOR OF THE GREENVILLE NEWS FROM TED VOLSKAY, Acting President LWV Greenville County, MAY 2014

Graham, Haley shouldn't be leading MOX debate

Senator Lindsey Graham and Gov. Nikki Haley are lobbying on behalf of French conglomerate Areva to produce mixed-oxide fuel (MOX) from spent nuclear material at the Savannah River site (SRS). According to Gov. Haley, it is not about whether utilizing the facilities at SRS is a good idea- the more we use SRS the more jobs we create.

Apparently, it does not matter that:

1) *Areva's MOX process, designed to recycle spent fuel from commercial nuclear reactors, cannot recover alloyed weapons-grade (non-*

proliferation) plutonium without extensive redesign and cost overruns;

2) *The market for MOX is in decline since the Fukushima disaster. German is dismantling its entire commercial nuclear program and is negotiating to send nuclear waste to SRS;*

3) *SRS has limited capacity for storing additional high level nuclear materials including unsold MOX and MOX byproducts. Consequently MOX production may cease in less time that it takes to build the MOX plant; and*

4) *SRS overlies vulnerable coastal plain aquifers that are prolific sources of drinking water for the Southeast.*

5) *Exposure to anthropogenic sources of radiation can lead to increased incidents of cancer and many radioactive by products have half-lives in excess of 1,000 years. It is unsettling to think that Senator Graham (BS Psychology and JD) and Gov. Haley (BS Accounting) hold sway on the ultimate fate of any nuclear process or material.*

The SRS MOX facility is a multi-billion dollar bridge to nowhere and South Carolina is ill-suited to serve as an international repository for high-level nuclear waste. Victor T. Volskay Jr. (Ted)



Thanks to Local Leagues for Outstanding Results from the 2014 Youth Voter Registration Project

By Paula Egelson, LWVSC Vice President, Voters Service/Citizen Education

- LWVSC applied and received a \$4,000 grant from LWV education fund to register youth voters in underrepresented schools from January 2014 to June 2014.
- Eight local SC leagues participated in the LWVSC youth voter registration grant activities.
- Each local League that participated receives \$500 total in three installments for voter registration supplies and activities. Participating Leagues have received two installments.
- Total, participating SC local Leagues stated they would register students in 42 schools across the state. **In the end, students in over 80 schools were registered.**
- Local leagues have submitted their final reports. Once the final overall LWVSC report is submitted to LWVUS on or before July 31, 2014, Local leagues will receive their final installment.

Health Care For All

By David Ball, LWVSC Director, Health Care

It might seem odd that the League of Women Voters advocates Universal Health Care and Medicaid expansion. But the League has cut its teeth on citizen participation in democracy and taking on issues that improve the quality of life for all of our citizens. It is a far-sighted organization that realizes an enlightened electorate enjoys little if they lack access to healthcare or live in a world ravaged by climate change.

Health care and how we pay for it has changed appreciably since Carrie Chapman Catt and Maud Wood Park were advocating for Woman's Suffrage, Social Security, and the Food and Drug Act. Doctors practiced out of a black bag. The focus was on acute medical issues; there were far less advanced diagnostics or brand name drugs, and prices were in line with what folks could pay.

During the Second World War employers were prohibited from poaching scarce workers with higher wages. Casting about for something cheap they could offer employees they settled on healthcare insurance.

Today the world has been turned upside down. Corporations are people and healthcare isn't a right but a privilege for the increasingly few who can pony up the funds. Until the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) outlawed it an insurance

company could charge women more than men, fail to cover preexisting conditions (who doesn't have a health history?), or cancel coverage if you started costing them too much. Obamacare has also reduced the number of people without insurance by millions.

So much for the good news.

Despite having the best medical schools, best hospitals, and doing the best research America is ranked 39th by the World Health Organization. Forty million Americans lack health insurance and a similar number are underinsured. Bankruptcy due to medical bills is common. We spend twice as much as any other country on healthcare and we are the only industrialized nation that doesn't provide for its people. We spend 18% of our GDP on care and costs are rising.

Three major elements are necessary to provide an affordable, fair, and efficient health care system in our country. We must provide **Quality care** that isn't fragmented and inefficient. We must provide **Access** that is portable and unrelated to employment. And lastly, quality care and access are necessary but insufficient without **Cost containment**. Medicare for All would address all three of these issues. HR 676, currently in Congress, would

replace private insurance with a Single Payer system. A few weeks ago South Carolina Congressman Jim Clyburn signed on as the 57th co-sponsor of the bill. Despite this encouraging news the prospect for passage anytime soon is remote.

In the short term we must take full advantage of the Affordable Care Act. That means expanding Medicaid in our state. Unfortunately, Governor Haley refuses to accept the \$1.2 Billion dollars we paid in federal taxes which we could get back to provide care for the poor. In addition to creating an estimated 44,000 new healthcare related jobs it would save the lives of between 1,000 and 1,300 South Carolinians who will die in the coming year without the necessary care that could be provided by Medicaid expansion.

Lynn Teague, our lobbyist in Columbia, has been doing an outstanding job working with a coalition of like-minded groups to reverse the Governor's obstructionist decision. The League is also supporting the work of **Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP)** as they put on programs the week of July 28th in Charleston and Columbia. There is much public education and advocacy that must be done to advance the cause of adequate healthcare for citizens in our state. Contact me if you would like to be involved.



Mother Earth Takes Over The Library



Local students learn about pollinators with the Spartanburg County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Mother Earth Takes Over the Library, sponsored by the League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County, Spartanburg County Public Libraries, and Spartanburg County Recycling was held on Earth Day, April 22nd, 2014 at the Headquarters Library in Spartanburg.

Local non-profits and government agencies, as well as environmental businesses were all invited to set up a table in the library's lobby to showcase the great work they do for our environment and the residents of Spartanburg County. Participants included the Spartanburg County Soil & Water Conservation District, with a fun display on pollinating insects. The stuffed bee and colorful posters made this table a huge hit with kids & adults! Piedmont Audubon highlighted results from their local bird counts, and focused on common birds found in our area and the importance of protecting their natural habitats. Trees Coalition signed up local residents for Kudzu Kollege, a program that trains individuals on the best practices for removing invasive species such as kudzu, English ivy, and privet. Their booth also displayed results from the many Trees parties they've held at neighborhoods throughout the County.

The AKA Epsilon Beta Omega chapter gave out free vegetable & flower seeds

and shared fun eco-facts with those who stopped by their booth. Green Congregations, a local interfaith group that promotes energy conservation and green practices handed out free tomato plants, which were a huge hit with everyone. Glendale Outdoor Leadership School shared information on their summer camps and team-building activities, as well as new paddling and trails information. Upstate Forever's table included air quality information as well as brochures on their many programs to protect natural resources in the Upstate. Compost Matters set up a display promoting their residential recycling & household compost collection program. Spartanburg Water showed how



John Moore with Spartanburg Water teaches a family about protecting water quality on Earth Day.

point & non-point source water pollution can contaminate our drinking water and what they do to keep our water clean, as well as what we can do to take care of the health of our watersheds. Hub City Farmer's Market's display included information on the many options residents have to obtain fresh, local, naturally grown fruits & vegetables, as well as updates on the Northside Healthy Food Hub initiative. The National Park Service had information on Cowpens National Battlefield's programs as well as information on the many local national parks. USC-Upstate's Watershed Ecology Center's booth was a



Nita Wilson with the USC-Upstate Watershed Ecology Center holds a bearded dragon for a local boy to touch.

huge hit with information on water quality, summer camp offerings, as well as live animals for parents and children to touch. Spartanburg County Recycling showed residents what can and cannot be recycled and what happens to trash once it gets thrown away in the landfill.

The League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County helped residents register to vote, and handed out litter bags. Spartanburg County Public Libraries provided prizes for drawings that were held throughout the day. All residents who attended Mother Earth Takes Over the Library gave enthusiastic feedback and were happy to have a way to celebrate Earth Day with the many organizations making it Earth Day Everyday in Spartanburg!

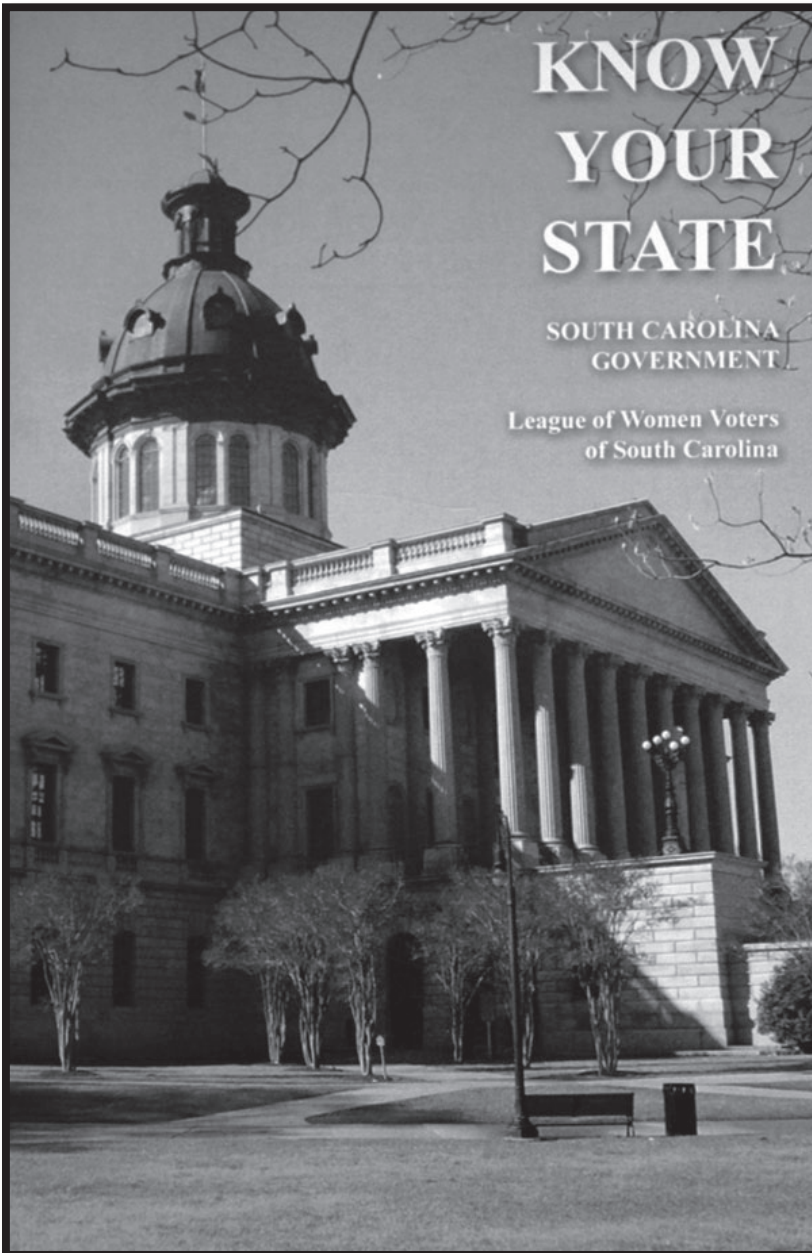


Mary Deku with the League of Women Voters of Spartanburg County registers a resident to win a prize at Mother Earth Takes Over the Library.



KNOW YOUR STATE

- UPDATED EDITION -



The most recent edition of LWVSC's *Know Your State: South Carolina Government* publication came out in 2009. A lot of water has passed under the state's bridges since then, so before reprinting, there has been an update in 2014. The update not only has the most recent numbers for state and local revenue, population, and student enrollment, but also reflects changes in photo ID for voters, Common Core Standards, the new on-line public school, the demise of the Budget and Control Board, and other legislative changes. This informative 72-page booklet is a great gift for speakers, school and public libraries, newcomers to the state, and a great reference for our members. The retail price is \$10, but Leagues can buy copies for \$7 and resell them at full price or give them to anyone you think might need a copy. You can pre-order copies for delivery at the January 31, 2016 LEAD Day by emailing league@lwvsc.org or calling 803-251-2726.

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Established in 1951, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina is a nonpartisan, political organization that encourages citizens to play an informed and active role in government. At the local, state, and national levels, the League works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Any citizen of voting age, male or female, may become a League member. All members receive the National Voter, the SC Voter, and a newsletter from their local League.

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NATIONAL CONVENTION



South Carolina Leaguers enjoy a celebratory moment at convention banquet with reelected LWVUS president Elisabeth MacNamara.



SC delegates enjoy breakfast conversation at LWVUS convention. From left, Julie Hussey, Dee Woodward, Linda Gahan, Fran Holt, Peggy Appler, Barbara Zia, JoAnne Day, Nancy Finch, Julie Sellers.



Yvette, a new LWV friend from Toledo, poses with Dee Woodward and Linda Gahan at the convention banquet.