



THE VOTER

November 2017 Vol. 44 No. 8

Newsletter of the League of Women Voters of the Clemson Area
Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee and Anderson Counties

Message from the Co-President

The United States has a dismal record of voter participation. According to Pew Research, in their most recent national elections, twelve countries had over 70% of votes cast by percentage of voting-age population ranging from Italy with 71% to Belgium with 87%. In our last national election, we had 56% participation among the voting age population, between Estonia with 57% and Luxembourg at 55%.



Patrick Dennis, Counsel to the SC Speaker of the House, speaking at a statewide LWV event earlier this year, pointed out that less than 10% of eligible SC voters vote in primaries. Those few have a lot of power in choosing who is going to represent us, since so many SC elections are decided in the primary.

There is much concern over this situation. There are many organizations addressing this. Not the least of which is the League of Women Voters.

Among the proposals, from various sources:

Making the registration process easier. Registering online, same day registration, expanding voting rights to felons are among the considerations. (South Carolina automatically restores voting rights, once felons complete their sentence; there are two states which prohibit convicted felons from ever voting again.)

Streamlining and simplifying voting. Expand practice of vote by mail (used by Oregon since 1990s, and they have one of the highest voting rates in the country). Expand early voting opportunities.

Other ideas include instant runoff voting which is thought to better represent the views of third party voters and would eliminate the need for a later runoff, and a national popular vote for president which would expand participation in the presidential race from a few battleground states to all states.

These are all ideas about what can be done. Many of these ideas would result in heightened interest in elections and thus, would result in increasing the number of choices on the ballot. In the 2016 election SC State Senate seats 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 had no opposition in the General Election and many seats of SC State Representatives were uncontested.) I continue to be concerned about WHY there is such a low turnout of voters. A Tri-County Tech student recently told League member, Elizabeth Vogt, he had a higher statistical probability of dying in a car accident on the way to the polls than having his vote count in South Carolina. One way the League can make a difference is by working for a system to create districts (from school board to Congressional districts) where one's vote is likely to make a difference. We are working to establish an independent commission which operates with very clear criteria for drawing districts. Please join us on November 19, yes, on a Sunday afternoon, where we will help participants develop their advocacy skills. Among the special guests will be Gary Clary, local member of the SC House of Representatives – redistricting will be a topic of focus. See the article later in this newsletter and mark your calendars to join us there.

Janie Shipley

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THE VOTER

League of Women Voters Clemson Area
Serving the Citizens of Pickens, Oconee, and Anderson Counties

P. O. Box 802, Clemson, SC 29633

www.lwvclemsonarea.org

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, November 14 - General Meeting - SC's Promise Zone and Understanding Rural Needs, 7:15 p.m. OLLI Building

Sunday, November 19 - Advocacy Workshop, Abel Baptist Church, 3:00-4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, December 19 - Holiday Party , 6:00 p.m. OLLI

Monday, January 8 - Pickens County Delegation Meeting, Pickens County Performing Arts Center (previously known as Liberty Civic Center) Liberty

Tuesday, January 16 - General Meeting - TBA, 7;15 p.m. OLLI Building

Saturday, January 27 - LEAD Day - Columbia

Tuesday, January 30 - Drop in to Celebrate 50th Anniversary of Formation of the League of Women Voters Clemson Area

Tuesday, February 20 - General Meeting - What's Next for Health Care? 7:15 p.m. OLLI Building

Tuesday, March 20 -m General Meeting - TBA OLLI Building

Tuesday, April 17 - General Meeting - Primaries and the General Election, 7:15 p.m. OLLI Building

Tuesday May 10 - Annual Meeting and 50th Anniversary Party (Occasions at Wedgefield)

OLLI Building, 578 Issaqueenq Trail, Clemson. 100 Thomas Green Blvd Clemson, (864-633-5242)

Abel Baptist Church, 150 Abel Rd, Clemson

For further information check the website, www.clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org/

Would you like to know more about topics of interest to the League?

We have a web site that cites links to reliable news articles on redistricting, Dreamers, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act and climate change. These pages will be updated and new topics added as needed. The web site is:

<http://clemsonarea-members.sc.lwvnet.org/ADVOCACY.html>

We also have email lists for communication on these topics. If you would like to be added to any of these email lists, please send email to CeCe Parker (ADVOCACY@clemsonarea.sc.lwvnet.org) indicating which topics interest you.

November General Meeting

November 14th Program: A Project to Improve the Economic Viability of the SC “Corridor of Shame”

Dr. Kenneth Robinson and students from his Clemson upper-level sociology class will detail their work to improve the well-being of residents in a six-county area of the SC Low-Country, an area designated by the federal government as one of the most persistently poor areas in the US. Funded by USDA and HUD, the SC Promise Zone’s state grantee is the SC Regional Development Alliance. As a partner, the specific task of Clemson is to identify Promise Zone assets and how these resources can strengthen community development.

The project holds promise for a number of reasons: it has a 10-year funding commitment from the federal government, with possibility for renewal, and it uses a holistic approach focused on harnessing social/cultural as well as economic initiatives to improve the lives of the region’s residents.

Come and hear about this exciting project presented by Dr. Robinson and his students. Three teams of students will present their work to date in the areas of Health Care, Food and Agriculture, and Education. Also, be prepared to hear how we, LWVCA, can support efforts to improve this long-overlooked area of SC.

Dr. Kenneth Robinson and his wife, Lisa, have been members of LWVCA for many years. Please join us to support him and the important work in which he and his students are engaged.

submitted by Janet Marsh

Book Review

Thomas Friedman totally engages readers of his latest book, *Thank You for Being Late*, particularly if the reader is a member of the League of Women Voters. This is the first task of an author - reader engagement with the main character, in this case, Friedman.

How does he do this?? First, the topic on which he writes so eloquently and thoroughly appeals to our intelligence, broad vision and natural curiosity... qualities of League members. He writes about societal forces that affect the very foundations on which we base our League positions. Second, he brings these points home by using his own, sometimes very personal experiences to point to “solutions” that will resonate with all League members.

Friedman proposes we need to understand three main forces that are accelerating together in order to understand and survive in the 21st century, “tectonic movements that are reshaping the world today.” He suggests “how to get the most out of them and cushion their worst impacts.” Working from great depth and breadth of knowledge and experience, he details these forces: technology, globalization, and climate change/biodiversity loss. He traces their development and acceleration, particularly since 2007, their interactions on each other, and how they are transforming five key realms: workplace, politics, geopolitics, ethics and community. (*continued p.5*)

October Meeting review

Wasted votes, salamander shape, compact and contiguous are just a few terms from the LWVCA meeting on political districts.

SC LWV voted to study Redistricting at the last convention. The 5 year plan includes training speakers who will educate the citizens on this basic issue. Some of our members are ready to present such programs. After every census (which must be properly funded) the states must provide for equal, fair representation in Congress. Other districts are also re-drawn like school boards and state houses. Population growth and movement necessitate this. Making sure the process uses unbiased criteria to create competitive, fair boundaries is our challenge. We must monitor the process, widening the doors for input and oversight.

We learned the history of Re-apportionment, some pitfalls, cases in the Courts, and options other states use such as independent commissions. Currently the system has provided for protection of incumbents, lines that dilute voting strength or cram minorities into one district, and lopsided vote counts. Gerrymandering is the deliberate manipulation of lines for the desired outcome.

A vote is “wasted” when you vote for the loser, or are counted in the excess number the winner accumulates. The efficiency gap (the difference between wasted votes of winners and losers divided by total number of votes) is a measure of partisan symmetry - and should be less than 10%. The 2016 SC Congressional vote was 17%. The “salamander” district popped into existence in the 1812 MA state senate plan, when Elbridge Gerry was Governor. “Compact” districts have a quantitative aspect, ask a mathematician. Districts may be “contiguous” but very sprawling, and sometimes physical geography is to blame. There is no perfect plan.

Districts must be more competitive to ensure that our voices are heard and that legislators will respond to voters. Is a lack of challengers to incumbents a sign that the system is rigged? Do we want to choose our legislators or have them choose us? Voters have more confidence in the electoral process if they feel their vote counts.

The League and our coalition members are preparing the lawmakers and public to resolve the issues. We start with education, have input to the redistricting plan, follow its formation and, if necessary, challenge it in the courts.

Submitted by Sharon Fennel

<http://clemsonarea-members.sc.lwvnet.org/REDISTRICTING.html>

<http://lwvcharleston.org/RedistrictingReform.html>

Will Congress Authorize Funding for CHIP ?

Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) provide no-cost or low-cost health coverage (including dental) for an estimated 82,000 children in South Carolina. CHIP is a federally-funded, state-administered block grant program.

Congress failed to reauthorize CHIP in September.

In late October, the House passed a funding bill, mostly along party lines. In the Senate, work on CHIP legislation has been bipartisan from the start. The Senate Finance Committee has voted to provide five years of funds for the program, but it has not specified a way to cover the cost.

Funding in SC is expected to be exhausted by June 2018.

Advocacy Workshop

Would you like to feel that you have some control over the public policies that influence your life and the life of your community? Well, put 3:00, November 19, on your calendar.

The League of Women Voters - Clemson Area is sponsoring an advocacy workshop called "Getting What You Want From Your Public Officials." It is at Abel Baptist Church at 150 Abel Road in Clemson from 3:00 to 4:30.

Four panelists will discuss effective ways to communicate with elected officials. The focus of the advocacy discussions will be the wise and healthy management of land development and the process of redistricting to create competitive elections at all district levels after the 2020 Census, but the skills learned here can be applied to any public issue that is close to your heart.

The panelists include the following:

Representative Gary Clary of SC District 3 (Clemson Area),
Councilwoman Lillian Brock Flemming of District 2 Greenville City Council,
Lynn Teague, vice president of Issues and Action of the SC LWV,
Shelia Crawford, president of Pickens County NAACP.

Please invite your friends, work associates, church members, members of your organizations, classmates, students, and neighbors. The workshop is open to the public. Some groups who have been invited are Up-state Forever, Sierra Club, Clemson Indivisible, Democratic and Republican parties of Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens, NAACP of Anderson, Oconee, and Pickens.

We would love to have a large gathering to help as many as possible gain skills to help them feel that have some control over the public policies that influence their lives.

submitted by Cece Parker

continued from p. 3

How does he do this?? First, the topic on which he writes so eloquently and thoroughly appeals to our intelligence, broad vision and natural curiosity.... qualities of League members. He writes about societal forces that affect the very foundations on which we base our League positions. Second, he brings these points home by using his own, sometimes very personal experiences to point to "solutions" that will resonate with all League members.

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submitted by Janet Marsh

New Members

Judy Benson has been active in the community since she and her husband retired to Lake Keowee 19 years ago.



She and her husband, Paul, met in high school in Florence, SC. Later, he studied geology at Clemson and she was an education major at Winthrop. She received her M.Ed. at UNC. They spent their adult life, with their two children, traveling for his work in Oil Exploration, living in England, Canada and a number of US cities. A

nomadic life was not unknown to Judy; her father was in the Navy.

Judy served on the Clemson Child Development Center Board (CCDC) for six years. She was president of the Board for three years. Her strong commitment to CDC continues. While traveling from city to city with her husband, she taught elementary school for 10 years and volunteered in local schools.

Paul and Judy have two children living in Texas, and five, mostly grown, grandchildren.

LWVCA friends encouraged Judy to join the League. She is motivated by her desire to find reliable political information and be more informed. Her interests are in the areas of education and health care.

Julie Ogletree joined LWVCA because she wants to have an influence on improving impoverished communities and environment policies.

Julie was born in Kentucky and later met her husband at UGA where she received her Bachelor's and Master's in Accounting. Soon after her graduation she joined the staff of CMF, a non-profit working over-



seas. She spent nine months in Nairobi and 4 years in Ethiopia offering accounting services (business administration and liaison to the government) for health clinic projects in the CMF network.

Prior to moving to Clemson she lived in Asheville and in Colorado with her husband. He is finishing his doctorate at Clemson in protected areas management.

She teaches accounting at Tri-County. Recently she completed a Master's Degree in International Studies through Webster University. Her hope is to eventually return to Africa and work in global development issues.

Julie is a volunteer at the African American Museum in Clemson and recently joined its board.

Why Do We Have So Few Choices in the General Election ?

In the 2016 General Election for the SC Senate, 28 Republicans ran in districts with no Democratic opponent and 11 Democrats ran in districts with no Republican opponent. Only 7 of the 46 Senate districts provided a race between the two major parties.

The SC House contests were a little better. Although only 15% of Senate districts offered major party competition, 26% of the 124 House districts did so.

Why have the major political parties allowed the General Election ballots to become so unexciting?

Submitted by Eleanor Hare

Carolyn Miller joined the League after she attended Women's Equality Day at the invitation of Charlotte Holmes. She likes what the League stands for and believes it is a well-respected organization.



Born and raised in northern Indiana, she lived in many parts of the US as her husband was moved from plant to plant by Bendix-Allied Signal. They settled in Pinnacle Point over 20 years ago, living there until she moved to Patrick Square a year ago. The house and yard upkeep, which she did herself, just became too much!

Carolyn played golf until recently and was also a singer at numerous community events over the years. Music is her first love. She also enjoys good art and visits to galleries and paying bridge.

Carolyn's son lives in Inman and her grandson lives in Asheville.

The Full Report of the National Climate Assessment is available at <http://nca2014.globalchange.gov/report>

Pam and Patrick Warren joined the League because they know the League is working to protect our democratic institutions which they believe are



under threat in our current political climate.

Pam and Patrick met at the SC Governor's School for Science and Mathematics. They both attended the University of South Carolina for undergraduate degrees, and Pam received a Master's Degree in Library and Information Science from USC as well. Following their marriage, they moved to Boston where Patrick received a PhD in Economics from MIT and Pam worked as a law librarian.

They moved to Clemson in 2008 and have two children ages 6 and 9. Pam is a stay-at-home mom and is active in Indivisible Clemson and as a volunteer at Clemson Elementary School. Patrick is a professor in the Economics Department at Clemson. He is a member of the Clemson-Calhoun Rotary Club, Indivisible Clemson and serves on the Pickens County Recreation Funds Board.

Membership dues for 2017-18 are now due. The fiscal year for LWVCA is June 1 through May 31. Dues are \$60 per member, \$30 for a second member of a household, and \$25 for student members.

Please make your check to LWVCA for \$60 and mail to LWVCA, PO Box 802, Clemson, SC, 29633.

Note: Dues received after February 1, 2017, are applied to the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

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

Anderson County Council 2nd and 4th Tuesdays, 6:00 pm
 Pickens County School Board 4th Monday, 7:00 pm
 Oconee County School Board 3rd Monday, 6:00 pm
 Anderson 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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