



SC Voter



Post Office Box 8453 • Columbia, SC 29202 • Phone & Fax: (803) 251-2726

Website: www.lwvsc.org

Volume 61, Issue 3

Winter 2010

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY 2010: *Health & Environmental Impact on Student Achievement*

Since the “Corridor of Shame” production highlighted the condition of education in South Carolina, more attention is now being focused on the conditions surrounding students and their families that impact performance at school. Following that interest, the 2010 Legislative Advocacy Day is structured around questions of health and the environment, and what we know that affects how well students perform in school.

Join your League colleagues at the Columbia Marriott on February 23, 2010, to learn about the policies that

our legislators should address to make improvements in the lives of children as well as their families and our communities.

Kicking off the day, **Dr. Oscar Lovelace**, family health advocate and practitioner, is able to connect the day to day health issues of children and their families with real life practices needed to address those issues. The former candidate for South Carolina governor continues to be a voice for improved health services to children, especially in rural areas of our state, and will share his ideas with us.

Nancy Vinson, program director for the Coastal Conservation League will focus our attention on air and water quality related to public health. The issues are usually community based and affect everyone, but children have little influence on changes in their environment that would improve their school performance. Discussion will follow a power point presentation and policy positions identified for the afternoon with legislators.

Dr. Tiffany Williams, MUSC College of Nursing, will moderate a panel to highlight several health issues facing South Carolina children. Nutrition and

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY *continued on page 3 –*

Local League Scene - Greenville Leaguers Are so **SKIRT!**

LWV/Greenville County members Sylvia Dreyfus, Kathleen Kempe and Rebecca Lambert were featured recently in **SKIRT!** Magazine:



Sylvia Dreyfus, Kathleen Kempe, and Rebecca Lambert may be women of diverse ages, with distinct life experiences, that enjoy different interests—but they have at least one thing in common. All are passionate about politics. Through the Greenville League of Women Voters, they put their passion to work.

“We believe in a healthy democracy and informed participation of citizens in our government. Sylvia has registered hundreds of voters. Because she felt strongly about issues, she ran for and served in the state legislature. Kathleen organizes candidate political forums. Appalled that so few elections are contested, she took on an incumbent and served in the state legislature. Rebecca, appointed to the Greenville Election Commission, wants more women in elective office and runs campaign schools to encourage women to get involved in politics. We vote. We want you to vote, too. It’s good for your constitution!”

Reprinted with permission from SKIRT!

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Barbara Zia
President, LWVSC

2010 will be an important year for South Carolina voters and for the League. In addition to choosing a new governor, there will be critical elections for our state's constitutional offices, U.S. Senate and House, the General Assembly, and local offices. Our state's revenue declines and tax policies have severely constrained the ability of state and local governments to fund services in LWV priority areas like healthcare, education, child welfare, juvenile and adult justice, and environmental protection. And the state legislature faces work on a number of important bills when the session resumes in January.

As a state and nation, we face enormous challenges – securing public safety, providing quality healthcare for all, addressing climate change, educating our children, protecting the rights of voters, to name only a few. But tackling these challenges is critical if we are going to maintain a leadership role in the national and global community. For South Carolinians, these issues are shaped and decided in the halls of Congress but perhaps more importantly, in our state legislature, state agencies, county and town councils, and school boards.

The League of Women Voters is uniquely positioned to be a voice for voters. In fact, 2010 marks the 90th anniversary of women's suffrage and the LWV. In South Carolina, as in

President's Perspectives:

LWV - Still the Voice of Voters after 90 Years

states across our nation, the League is one of the only and one of the strongest citizen activist groups. We play a pivotal role in helping an informed citizenry cast their votes, encouraging citizen participation in government, and protecting their vote.

Recently, *Chester Sansbury*, a Columbia Area League member, shared with me his appreciation for the League's unique "bottom-up involvement of members on statewide issues." He wrote:



"It's tough to keep up with everything and stay engaged, but true grassroots organizations like the LWV which is dependent on well-educated volunteers instead of paid staff need to stay committed and involved. That's a major reason I prefer the League. Members are well-educated, objective, open and transparent, hardworking, non-paid citizens, and trustworthy".

- Chester Sansbury



An environmental activist and member of the LWVSC water study committee and our action team, Chester can often be found wearing his League button, observing and delivering testimony for the League at legislative meetings on a range of priority issues--from election law to education financing to environmental regulation.

Our strong, trusted voice is heard above the din of party politics because of members like Chester all across South Carolina. The unique strengths that he refers to are grounded in our intensive member study, consensus and

grassroots action. These are the qualities that give the League credibility with citizens, public officials and media alike.

For example, respected attorney Armand Derfner invited LWVSC recently to file an Amicus brief to the S.C. Supreme Court in support of a petition that challenges the constitutionality of the way in which judges are selected in here. The petition deals with the Judicial Merit Selection Commission's ruling that Charleston Family Court Judge Segers-Andrews is unqualified. *Segers-Andrews v. Judicial Merit Selection Commission, et al.* was filed in the Supreme Court in late December by Armand Derfner, Morris Rosen and Alex Sanders. According to the attorneys, the League could be a great help in showing that there is public sentiment, represented by one of the most highly respected organizations, in support of the great importance of the case. LWVSC involvement is seen as a critical element to success.

Our 2008 judicial selection forum and the members of that panel give us a particular acuity and position to support this effort. The judicial selection process has been an area of concern to LWV for some time. This case goes to the heart of LWVSC support for a qualified, independent, diverse judiciary. An Amicus Brief, prepared for us by Constance Anastopoulo, LWV/Charleston Area vice president and Charleston School of Law professor, was filed with the Supreme Court of S.C. in early January.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the state board, local League leaders and all our members for your tremendous support throughout 2009. As we launch a new year and a new decade I wish you a year filled with all the benefits that accrue from a strong, healthy democracy.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY:

continued from page 1 –

issues of obesity will be outlined by **Dr. James Stallworth**, USC Medical School professor and expert on obesity in children. **Cindy Poole**, assistant executive director and midlands coordinator of Healthy Learners will outline the actions being taken in several locations around the state to mitigate the lack of access to health care and/or identifying health issues that can be

treated. **Zenica Chapman** from the Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy will provide us with information about teen pregnancy rates in addition to related diseases that impact on teens and their academic performance.

“So how do we pay for these changes? We don’t have any money.” asks the hypothetical legislator. Reconfiguring the current taxes is one answer to that response and the lunch speaker, **Dr. Michael Fanning**, executive director,

Olde English Consortium, will provide an insightful and energizing look at how we can direct legislators’ attention to millions of dollars requiring their action to make it available.

Plan now to attend and make appointments to meet with your local legislators that day in Columbia. 2010 Legislative Advocacy Day promises to be lively and thought provoking, providing the basis for effective advocacy in the General Assembly.

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY SCHEDULE

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2010 • *Palmetto Ballroom, Marriott Hotel*

1200 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC • 803-771-7000

- 8:30 am** Registration, continental breakfast
- 9:15 am** Welcome, introduction of guests
- 9:30 am** **Dr. Oscar Lovelace**, child and family health advocate and practitioner
- 9:45 am** **Environmental Impact on Student Achievement**
Nancy Vinson, program director, SC Coastal Conservation League
- 10:30 am** **Health Impact on Student Performance**
Dr. Tiffany Williams, MUSC College of Nursing; panel moderator
Dr. James Stallworth, USC Medical School; obesity in children
Zenica Chapman, SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Cindy Poole, Healthy Learners; access to health care through schools
- Noon** Health Break – Luncheon Setup
- 12:15 pm** Luncheon
“How to Get More Blood from the Turnip”
Dr. Michael Fanning, executive director, Olde English Consortium
- 1:30** Adjourn to Statehouse complex to meet with legislators and attend meetings

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LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY DAY REGISTRATION

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2010

Marriott Hotel, 1200 Hampton Street, Columbia, SC

Name (please print) _____

Organization _____

Mailing Address _____

Daytime Phone _____ Fax _____

E-Mail Address _____

Advance Registration (postmarked February 18)	\$ 35.00 _____
Discount parking ticket	\$ 5.00 _____
Total Enclosed: check payable to AAUW of SC	\$ _____

Note: On-site registration is \$40.00 + parking

Send this completed form and check payable to AAUW of SC to: **Pat Hall, 1801 Ford Road, Gaffney, SC 29340**



Where Does South Carolina's Water Come From?

By Andy Yasinsac, Member, LWVSC Water Study Committee

This is the first of a series of background papers related to the two-year LWVSC Study on Water Resource Management in South Carolina. The papers will help League members understand issues related to freshwater supply and usage in South Carolina. This introductory summary gives a general description of water sources, both surface water and groundwater, used by the people of South Carolina. The emphasis is on surface water.

Surface Water River Basins

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) describes the surface waters of South Carolina as consisting of eight distinct river basins: Broad River, Catawba River, Edisto River, Pee Dee River, Salkehatchie River, Saluda and Congaree Rivers, and Santee River.

Notes: The Congaree is included with the Saluda only as an administrative convenience of DHEC; Broad River also joins the Saluda to form the Congaree. The description of each river basin includes the names of the counties or parts of counties through which the rivers run.

Broad River originates in North Carolina as does a major tributary, North Pacolet River. The Broad River is already quite significant in size when it enters South Carolina near Blacksburg, north of Gaffney. The North Pacolet River is a moderate-to-small-size river when it enters South Carolina northeast of Landrum. It flows through Spartanburg County and enters the Pacolet River, which originates in South Carolina. The Pacolet flows into the Broad north of Lockhart. (*Counties:* Greenville, Spartanburg [Pacolet], Cherokee, Union, Laurens, Chester, Fairfield, Newberry, Richland)

Catawba River originates in northwestern and western North Carolina and is quite a large river when it enters South Carolina, as Lake Wylie, north of Rock Hill. The Catawba River becomes the Wateree River at the headwaters of Lake Wateree northwest of Camden. (*Counties:* York, Lancaster, Chester, Fairfield, Kershaw, Richland, Sumter)

Edisto River originates in central South Carolina as the North Fork Edisto River (near Batesburg) and South Fork Edisto River (in northern

Aiken County). After the two forks merge east of Bamberg, the Edisto provides a large part of the potable and industrial water for the Charleston area through a large tunnel. (*Counties:* Edgefield, Aiken, Saluda, Lexington, Barnwell, Bamberg, Orangeburg, Dorchester, Colleton, Charleston, Beaufort)

Pee Dee River originates as the Yadkin River in northwest North Carolina and is a large river where it enters South Carolina northwest of Cheraw. Little Pee Dee River originates in southeastern North Carolina and joins the Pee Dee at the south end of Marion County. (Dillon, Marlboro, Chesterfield, Darlington, Marion, Florence, Horry, Lee, Sumter, Williamsburg, Georgetown)

Salkehatchie River basin includes Ashepoo River, Salkehatchie River (which becomes Combahee River near the coast), and Coosawhatchie River. They all originate in south central South Carolina near Walterboro, Aiken and Allendale, respectively. The coastal areas of the Ashepoo and Combahee combine with the coastal Edisto to form the ACE Basin, sizable portions of which are preserved in extensive conservation easements. (*Counties:* Aiken, Barnwell, Bamberg, Allendale, Hampton, Colleton, Beaufort, Jasper)

Saluda/Congaree. Saluda River (North, Middle and South forks) originates in the mountainous areas of Greenville and Pickens counties, except that a sizable portion of the South Saluda River originates in North Carolina. (*Counties:* Spartanburg, Greenville, Pickens, Anderson, Laurens, Abbeville, Greenwood, Saluda, Newberry, Lexington, Richland, Calhoun)

Santee River originally consisted of the combination of the Congaree and Wateree Rivers, which flowed to the Atlantic Ocean near McClellanville.

Now, Lake Marion (the upper portion of this combination) has outlets to both the Santee River and Lake Moultrie. Lake Moultrie has a canal outlet to Santee River and also forms the headwaters of Cooper River, which flows into Charleston Harbor. (*Counties:* Sumter, Calhoun, Orangeburg, Clarendon, Williamsburg, Dorchester, Berkeley, Georgetown, Charleston)

Savannah River forms in western and southern South Carolina and in northern and eastern Georgia. It forms the boundary between South Carolina and Georgia, including the tributary Chatooga River, Tugaloo River, and the Tugaloo River arm of Lake Hartwell. (*Counties:* Pickens, Oconee, Anderson, Abbeville, Greenwood, McCormick, Edgefield, Aiken, Barnwell, Allendale, Hampton, Jasper, Beaufort)

River Watershed Basins

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) arranges the river watershed, or drainage, basins into four groups: Pee Dee, Santee (the largest by volume), ACE (contained within S.C.), and Savannah.

Major Municipal and Industrial Supply Aquifers

In relation to surface water, shallow groundwater tends to flow to streams. Thus, the same basins used for surface water may be appropriate to describe the flow of shallow groundwater. The precise definition of shallow will differ in different locations.

Deeper groundwater flow is less related to surface streams. Rather, deeper flows follow aquifers (soil or rock formations permeable enough to convey water) that may go in different directions at different depths. Also, the depths of the aquifers will change along the paths of flow. Further, groundwater flowing below stream

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Four New Nuclear Power Plants for South Carolina?

By Suzanne Rhodes, LWVSC Associate Director, Nuclear Issues

At a U.S. Energy Association forum in 2009, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chair Jon Wellinghoff stated: "I think baseload capacity is going to become an anachronism...Well, ultimately wind's going to be the cheapest thing to do, so you'll dispatch that first." Wellinghoff added that nuclear and coal plants are too expensive. He anticipates that the United States could reduce its electricity demand to about half of its current electricity demand. He supports developments in conservation, grid efficiency and renewables like wind, solar and biomass to provide enough energy to meet baseload capacity and future energy demands, as well as systems now available for concentrated solar plants that can provide 15 hours of storage.

But South Carolina's political leaders are following utility companies' lead in the planning of new nuclear baseload plants.¹ Next to nuclear, coal is the most expensive baseload option and

soon will be subject to additional emission and waste controls. With strong leadership from the LWV and other citizens, the coal plant proposed for Florence County has been canceled.

Nuclear power is the most expensive electricity baseload option, according to the Christian Science Monitor, Wall Street Journal, Rocky Mountain Institute, Vermont Law School² and American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. It is also risky: Six broad categories of risk-- technology, policy, regulatory, execution, marketplace and financial-- led Moody's³ to conclude that a decision to build a nuclear reactor is a "bet the farm" decision, even for large utilities. Note that SCE&G is considered small. SCANA is currently rated by Moody's only one step above speculative.

Why does this matter to South Carolina? Duke Power plans to build two nuclear power plants in Cherokee County; SCE&G/Santee Cooper is planning two plants in Fairfield

County. Each project is rationalized with a strategy that stresses the need for baseload capability, but neither has seriously considered efficiency, conservation or peak demand management.

South Carolina ratepayers are paying in advance for the four planned nuclear power plants. Since Wall Street will not support new reactors, nuclear industry lobbyists in the federal and state legislatures have launched a full court press to get loans to fund these projects from taxpayers (in the form of federal loan guarantees) and from ratepayers (through construction work in progress, or CWIP).

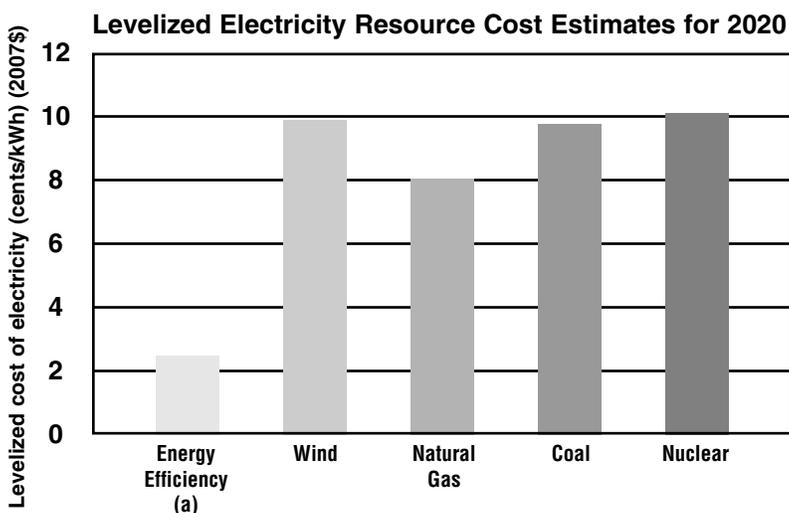
In summary, current regulations in South Carolina encourage utilities to make money by investing in large baseload plants. Instead let's work as a state to improve regulations for utilities, increase energy efficiency and conservation, and move forward toward an affordable energy future.

¹Baseload is the minimum amount of power that a utility or distribution company must make available to its customers, or the amount of power required to meet minimum demands based on reasonable expectations of customer requirements.

²All Risk, No Reward for Taxpayers and Ratepayers, the Economics of Subsidizing the 'Nuclear Renaissance' with Loan Guarantees and Construction Work in Progress, Mark Cooper, Senior Fellow for Economic Analysis, Institute for Energy and the Environment, Vermont Law School, November 2009.

³Moody's Special Comment, *New Nuclear Generation: Ratings Pressure Increasing*, June 2009.

⁴Saving Energy Cost Effectively: A National Review of the Cost of Energy Save Through Utility-Sector Energy Efficiency Programs, American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, September 2009.



The non-profit American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE) reported that energy efficiency has been the cheapest and largest resource to satisfy growing demands for energy-related services in the U.S. economy. To illustrate, the ACEEE report includes a graphic comparing the cost of efficiency to baseload.

LWVSC Financial Review, FY 2008-2009

By Frances L. Elmore,
LWV/Florence Area

I reviewed the following financials for the year July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009 on Nov. 14, 2009:

General Ledger
Checkbook
Bank Statements
Expense Vouchers
Investments
LWV Ed Fund Account

All accounts were in order. No discrepancies were noted.

LWVSC Board News

- At its November meeting the Board accepted regretfully the resignation of **Chuck Gibbs** as Vice President/Voters Service. The Board will appoint a replacement to this critical position at its Jan. 23rd meeting. Chuck has ably served the state League for several years. He now plans to focus his considerable talent and energy on his local League, LWV/Sumter County.
- Board Director **Sarah Leverette** is being honored by Planned Parenthood with the **Barbara Moxon** Advocacy Award at a luncheon in Columbia on Jan. 20. All who know Sarah treasure her-- for her League leadership, her passion for good government, and her pioneering work as one of the first female attorneys in South Carolina. She has served the LWV for decades as state League president and as board director for the LWVSC and LWV/Columbia Area. Sarah turned 90 years young on Dec. 30. Amazingly, she and the League of Women Voters turn 90 within a few months of one another. Both are grand ladies who grow stronger with age. Barbara Moxon (Laurel Suggs' mother) is another extraordinary LWVSC president in whose name the advocacy award is bestowed annually.
- Board Director **Peggy Brown** has been named Conservationist of the Year by the South Carolina Sierra Club. She will receive the award at Sierra's Reception on Jan. 15 at the Columbia Museum of Art. Peggy played a major role in the successful campaign to stop the coal plant planned for Florence County.
- LWVSC Education Fund has donated \$1000 to the production of USC Aiken's film documentary **Edgewood — Stage of Southern History**. The film tells the story of politically influential women who resided at the Edgewood house, including **Eulalie Salley**, suffragist and a founder of the LWV in South Carolina. The documentary will premiere on Tuesday, March 30, at 7 p.m. in the Etherredge Center on the USC Aiken campus. LWVSC will be listed in the film credits and as a "Pickens-Salley Guardian" on the program at the premiere at the USC Aiken Pickens-Salley Symposium on Southern Women on March 30 and at the preview party. For a behind-the-scene look at the making of this film and the home's history, visit <http://www.edgewoodfilm.com>

Child Welfare Agenda - 2010

By *Janet Marsh, PhD, LWVSC Associate Director, Child Welfare*

The needs of many South Carolina children loom large as, once again, the 2009 Kids Count Data Book ranks our state 45th among states on the welfare of its children (<http://datacenter.kidscount.org/databook/2009/Default.aspx>).

However, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity". (Albert Einstein) It is with this belief, shared by many of you, that I report to you on the LWVSC child welfare agenda for 2010.

Several new coalitions have recently emerged in South Carolina to improve the well-being of our state's children. This is very encouraging and we plan on being a part of each one. Rita Paul, Barbara Zia, JoAnne Day, Carole Cato and I attended a December meeting of numerous organizations (e.g., AARP, SC Medical Association, March of Dimes) to develop a strategy that will lead to passage of an increased cigarette tax in

the 2010 legislative session.

Gladys Coles (LWV/Columbia Area) and I attended a December 'kick-off' meeting of 25-35 organizations (including SC Dept. of Social Services) that are mounting a new coordinated effort to decrease child abuse and neglect. One of the agencies charged by the state legislature to alleviate this problem is the Children's Trust, which will be an active coalition member (www.scchildren.org/ChildrensTrust). It appears there is sufficient interest to tackle this serious problem – stay tuned!

Focus on South Carolina's Kids is a new advocacy project of **SC Fair Share** and **Appleseed Legal Justice Center**. Its current work is to develop a **S.C. Children's Budget**, highlighting decreased funding to children's programs over the past years and using it to bring increased attention and resources to children. Focus on Kids will also work to increase healthcare

funding for children. LWVSC joined many other organizations in signing a letter delivered to all S.C. legislators urging them to make healthcare for kids their #1 priority.

We continue our support for high quality and affordable childcare. A few years ago the LWVSC was quite active in its support for a Quality Rating System (QRS) as one mechanism that could promote higher quality programs and better-informed parents. Once again, a QRS is on the legislative agenda as H. 4265, sponsored by Representative James E. Smith. Again, stay tuned!

Child welfare issues are also addressed by other League positions, such as juvenile justice. We hope, as areas of overlap are identified, we will have member interest and energy to join with others in our state to make it a better place for all children.

The Census Is Coming:

Help Give South Carolina a brighter future in 10 minutes.



By Bobby Bowers, Director, S.C. Budget and Control Board Office of Research and Statistics, and Chair, S.C. Complete Count Committee

Ten minutes is all it takes to answer the 10 questions on the 2010 United States Census that will arrive in your mailbox in March. The once-a-decade census determines our state's share of the \$400 billion in federal aid distributed each year and how much political power South Carolina will wield in Washington.

In 2000, South Carolina had the nation's second lowest initial response rate to the census questionnaire, trailing only Alaska. And our poor response rate has real consequences every day.

We lose out each year on at least \$60 million in federal aid – and probably much more – that is distributed using census population data. That's hundreds of millions of dollars over the decade that has gone to other states. We have received less money for things that make life better in our communities such as road repair and construction, health care, vocational education to help young people get good jobs and programs that care for the victims of violent crime.

As bad as those numbers are, the situation might actually be worse. It is estimated that more than 48,000 South Carolina residents were ultimately missed during the 2000 Census. Because South Carolina has many hard-to-count communities and a growing population, I suspect the number of people missed in 2000 was much higher than the official federal estimate.

A good census count is also important to cities and counties. Local governments receive direct aid from the state based solely on the number of residents within their borders. Each person counted generates about \$50 for a county and about \$30 for a municipality each year.

The financial consequences alone are enough to make the next census crucial. But this year the stakes are even higher.

South Carolina is very close to earning an additional seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Seats in the House are fixed at 435 and each state is guaranteed at least one representative. The rest of the seats are allocated based strictly on population. That means a state must grow much faster than the national average to take away a seat from another state.

And that is exactly what is happening in the Palmetto State. We were among the 10 fastest-growing states in the nation from 2007 to 2008,

Important 2010 CENSUS Dates	
February-March 2010	Census Questionnaires are mailed
April 1, 2010	CENSUS DAY
April-July 2010	Census takers visit households that did not return a questionnaire by mail
December 31, 2010	Census Bureau provides final report to the President for apportionment
March 2011	Census Bureau completes delivery of redistricting data to states

with most of the gain coming from people moving here from other parts of the country.

It is impossible to know at this point exactly what population number will be needed to earn a seventh House seat (and the additional vote in the Electoral College that goes with it). But I think we are going to be very close. If we get there, it would mark a major milestone for our state. South Carolina lost its seventh seat after the 1930 census, a time when people were fleeing South Carolina's struggling agricultural economy for new opportunities in the north.

The S.C. Budget and Control Board's Office of Research and Statistics is South Carolina's lead agency for working with

federal census officials. For some time now, we have been making unprecedented efforts to improve the state's census count. Part of this has meant providing extensive training to local governments around the state to help them submit accurate address lists that are used by federal officials as the basis for the census count.

We will also be leading a public awareness campaign that aims to make citizens more aware of just how important the census is to our state. Many organizations and civic groups have also signed on as partners with the U.S. Census bureau to help spread the word.

Completing the census will be easier than ever in 2010. Every residence will receive the simplified 10-question short form and your answers are entirely secure. Previously, some people had received a much longer form that included more detailed questions.

It is also important to know that all U.S. Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

Look for the census form in your mailbox this March. The form asks you to account for everyone living at your address as of April 1, 2010. A prepaid envelope is included so you can mail it back as soon as possible. Those who do not respond by mail will receive a second mailing. If the second form is not returned, a census taker will visit your residence to ask you the 10 questions.

More information about the census can be found at the national Census 2010 website <http://2010.census.gov>. You can also find information and data about South Carolina and the census at <http://census.sc.gov>. I hope you will join me in making sure that South Carolina counts in 2010.

LWVSC Participates In Conservation Leaders Summit

By Brusi Alexander, LWVSC Co-Director, Natural Resources

Don't use big, confusing words to influence voters or elected officials! That was one of the messages from Eric Eckl of Falls Church, VA. He gave several workshops at the 8th Annual Conservation Leaders Summit held on Nov. 9-10 at Seabrook Island and attended by approximately 45 people.

Eckl led attendees through the thought process of preparing to go see an elected official, getting to know and respond to your local voting district, and the "triggers" which we need to use to work successfully on any issue. He stated that often proponents of an issue tell about a problem but do not give a solution--tell your supporters what specifically to do. Poor

communications sap citizens' confidence in themselves, and then that inhibits their action. To keep people engaged, they must have confidence in themselves and that what they do matters.

We need to always consider demographics and communications, otherwise we fail because of accidental elitism. Conservation, and all issues, often discriminate against people of average or lower education levels. And recall that 1 in 5 South Carolina adults speak English as a foreign language. Using video Eckl showed, sometimes humorously, how words like "watershed" mean different things to different people. And people identify

with phrases like "clean water," whereas words like "water quality" are vague and impersonal.

Eckl's seminars touched on other interesting topics, such as how to deal with hostile people and how the computer often now supplants newspapers in information delivery.

The Summit also included reports on federal climate legislation and the efforts to engage the faith and military communities in these efforts. Another exciting initiative is to get agriculture back into prominence as a "business" in South Carolina. Currently, farming is not considered "major" in the state.

2010 Conservation Common Agenda Priorities

The 2010 Common Agenda includes many of the same issues lobbied for in 2009:

- **Keeping the Conservation Bank Alive:** Maintain base funding by removing the "Death Penalty" clause and offer tours of local projects.
- **Funding our Natural Resource Agencies:** State agencies that are SC's economic engine receive less than 1% of the state budget and have been dramatically cut.
- **Water Matters:** After two years of working on a fair approach for surface water permitting, it's time for S.452 to leave the Senate and move quickly through the House
- **No More 'Swimming in Sewage':** The Water Utility Notification bill heads to the Senate and we have a new "3 Strikes" bill to require DHEC to be tough with repeat offenders.
- **Re-energize South Carolina:** Adopt an Energy Efficiency Resource Standard and a Renewable Energy Standard--and ask about support for a federal clean energy bill.
- **Reduce Mercury Pollution & Change DHEC:** The fact that SC has such high levels of mercury pollution calls for restoring DHEC's mission to protect public health.

LWVSC offers you its latest publication: Know Your State: South Carolina Government

ORDER FORM: Please send me _____ copies of "Know Your State: South Carolina Government"

Member price: \$5.00 each • Non-Member price: 1-10 copies, \$10.00 each; 11+ copies, \$8.00 each • Total enclosed: \$ _____

Make checks payable to: League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC).

Mail to: League of Women Voters of SC, Attn: Peggy Appler, 910 Apple Core Lane, Ridgeville, SC 29472.

Name: _____ School: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____

Peggy Appler • (843) 607-5528 • dappler@homesc.com



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Website: www.lwvsc.org

Join the League today!

Mary Kelly Environmental Fund Update - *Energy Conservation Project*

By Suzanne Rhodes, LWVSC Associate Director, Nuclear Issues

LWVSC will partner with the South Carolina Energy Office and South Carolina State Library on a project to raise awareness about energy use and the need for conservation. Suzanne Rhodes, LWVSC Nuclear Specialist, will head up the project for the state League. Deborah Hotchkiss, LWV/Columbia Area member and head of State Library Development, will represent the Library.

The challenge is that South Carolina's per capita energy and electricity use was approximately 17th in the nation in 2007. Most citizens have little information about the cost of their energy choices. Interested state library systems will receive the Kill-a-Watt electricity measurement tool, in addition to traditional educational materials (posters, bookmarks, tips), to

enable citizens to measure and assess their electricity use. The 3-part Kill-a-Watt tool would be checked out like a DVD or book. The project will provide a list of possible speakers and topics, and a simple check-off evaluation form to determine what, if any, outcome resulted from the use of the tool.

Details about the project will be available soon. Contact Suzanne (suzrhodes@juno.com) if you have immediate questions or know of someone who might like to be involved.



Francis Marion University and LWVSC co-hosted a successful public forum on the future of energy efficiency in South Carolina on October 22 in Florence. From Carbon to Efficiency panelists, left to right: Florence Mayor Stephen Wukela; State Senator Paul Campbell, Berkeley County District 44; Ashlie Lancaster, Policy Director, SC Energy Office; Suzanne Watson, Director of Policy, American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy; Mike Couick, President and CEO, South Carolina Electric Cooperatives. Far right are: Barbara Zia, President, LWVSC; Dr. Fred Carter, President, Francis Marion University.

*Thank
You*

Your contributions to the Mary Kelly Environmental Fund support our efforts to inform South Carolinians about important environmental issues.

RECENT DONORS:

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Criminal Justice:

Sentencing Reform Commission to Make Final Recommendations

By Robin Kimbrough-Melton, JD, LWVSC Director, Criminal Justice

After nearly a year of hearing expert testimony and studying sentencing practices around the country, the South Carolina Sentencing Reform Commission (SRC) is ready to make its final recommendations. The year-long study will culminate in a report to the General Assembly and the South Carolina Supreme Court by February, 1, 2010. A public hearing on the SRC's recommendations will be held in early January 2010, after which the SRC will finalize its report.

Authorized by the General Assembly in 2008, the SRC was directed to review and recommend (1) changes to the current sentencing guidelines for offenses where one year of imprisonment is possible, (2) any changes to the current parole system, and (3) guidelines for handling offenders where imprisonment is not considered appropriate. The League

has provided both oral and written testimony to the SRC.

The proposed recommendations would make some key changes in drug sentences including permitting probation, suspended sentences and parole for all non-trafficking controlled substance offenses. The recommendations also call for a continuum of community-based treatment options and expanded use of work-release programs for non-violent offenders who are not currently eligible. Because these later recommendations have fiscal implications, it is difficult to predict whether these recommendations will be implemented.

Once the final report becomes available, the LWVSC Criminal Justice Committee will work with local League leaders to disseminate the findings. In the meantime, the Committee is monitoring proposed legislation from

this effort. In you would like more information about the SRC or the activities of the Criminal Justice Committee, please contact Robin Kimbrough-Melton at robinkimbrow@hotmail.com.

Juvenile Justice -- Aleta Robinson of the LWV/Clemson Area is helping the League organize on juvenile justice issues. She has arranged for members to meet with Judge Byars, director of the Department of Juvenile Justice, to discuss ways in which the League can support DJJ's agenda. **The meeting will be held Friday, Jan. 22 at 2:30 p.m. at the DJJ in Columbia.** We anticipate meeting with Judge Byars for about one hour and then taking a tour of the girls' facility. If you are interested in attending, please contact Aleta at sixmiletoo@aol.com or 864-868-9238.



What is ITA and why is it so important for our schools?

By Holley Ulbrich, PhD, LWVSC Associate Director, Taxation

A top priority for the League in the upcoming legislative session is to address the problems created by Act 388 for the index of taxpaying ability (ITA). The ITA measures the share of total statewide assessed property value located in each district. It is used to determine what share of a school district's EFA (Education Finance Act) operating funds come from the state and how much must be raised locally. A high index requires more local funding, while a low index means more state aid. The ITA distributes more operating revenue to poorer school districts to help level the education playing field.

From 1977 until Act 388, the ITA was a good way to apportion local responsibility for the EFA part of education finance. It measured a school district's ability to raise more money by raising mill rates. In the 1990s, county councils were allowed to negotiate fee in lieu agreements (FILOT) with new and expanding business firms. A FILOT replaces property taxes for these firms with a fixed annual fee. The fee help fund schools and county services, but when the school district raises its tax rate, FILOT property doesn't generate additional revenue. So the ITA no longer measured the ability to raise revenue.

The Department of Revenue came up with this solution. Suppose the fee is \$100,000 a year. That fee can be treated as equivalent to a property tax payment. To convert the payment into a property value, just divided by the tax rate. A tax rate of 80 mills is 8 percent, or .08. The property would have to be worth \$1.25 million in assessed (taxable) value to generate \$100,000 in property taxes. So the Department of Revenue entered that property at \$1.25 million in the ITA.

In 2006, Act 388 further complicated the ITA problem by replacing school operating taxes on homeowner property with state property tax relief payments. After the first year, increases in state property tax relief payments are no longer tied to the value of homeowner property, so new homes

generate no new revenue for school operations. But new owner-occupied homes still count in the ITA, because they still owe taxes for city and county services and school bonded debt.

This issue wouldn't matter if all districts had the same share of homeowner property in their tax bases, but they don't. The state average share of homeowner property in the tax base is 30.4%. Districts with a higher share of homeowner property get relatively more property tax relief payments from the state, but if they have to raise the mill rate, they will generate less additional revenue another district with the same ITA but more non-homeowner property.

What about just taking owner-occupied property out of the ITA? The ITA for a "bedroom" school district with lots of homeowner property would drop more than average, so the school district would get more EFA aid from the state. These same districts already get more state property tax relief than average, because they have more homeowner property. A district with less than average owner-occupied property already gets less than average state property tax relief payments and would now also get less EFA money. So taking homeowner property out of the index would redistribute EFA money in ways that wouldn't really be fair. Among the counties whose school districts would collectively get less EFA money are Aiken, Beaufort, Charleston, Florence, and Spartanburg. All would lose EFA funds.

The state could fix the ITA for homeowner property the same way as fee in lieu property. Homeowner property would still be in the index, but its value would be based on property tax relief payments from the state, not actual assessed values. This kind of adjustment to the ITA would be fairer to districts with below-average shares of homeowner property in their tax base. But in the long run, the state needs to come up with a better way to decide how much each local school district should contribute to the cost of K-12 education.

In the absence of corrective legislation, the homeowner property will be removed from the index starting in 2010. Urge your legislators to consider the impact of this change on EFA funding for their school districts.

JOIN OTHER CONSERVATIONISTS TO LOBBY

LWVSC Lobby Day will be March 23, 2010.

We invite you to join us at the Statehouse to share with legislators why you feel it's important to protect South Carolina's clean land, air, energy and water.

Volunteers are NOT expected to be experts on all these issues.

We will review the top legislative issues with you beforehand, and conservation lobbyists are available to answer any questions you may have. The main purpose of the day is to build better relationships with legislators. As a participant you are expected to engage in more "small talk" and polite conversation about why a clean environment is important to you, rather than give your legislators detailed explanations about a bill.

Meet us at the Nickelodeon Theatre in Columbia at 11 a.m. Lobby teams typically last until 3:00 p.m.

The Nickelodeon is at 937 Main St., on the corner of S. Main and Pendleton Streets behind the Statehouse. (Street parking is available at green two-hour meters, or in parking garages located at Lady and Assembly Streets or Gervais and Sumter Streets.) **Please RSVP to Brusi Alexander at cricketwm@aol.com (email) or 803-251-2726 (phone) if you can attend.** (Business attire)

IMPORTANT LEAGUE DATES:

January

16th Saturday, 1-3 p.m., *LWVSC Water Study Committee Meeting*, 700 Gervais St., Suite 300, Columbia (Office of McAngus Goudelock and Courie, Mullen Taylor's law firm).

22nd Friday, 2:30 p.m., *LWVSC Meeting with Judge Bill Byars, Department of Juvenile Justice Director*, 4900 Broad River Rd., Columbia.

23rd Saturday, 10-3:00, *LWVSC Board Meeting*, 1600 St. Julian Place, Columbia. *

31st Saturday, *LWVUS Membership Count Deadline*

February

Black History Month & Youth Voter Month

14th Sunday, *League's 90th Birthday*

23rd Tuesday, *LWVSC Legislative Advocacy Day*, Columbia Marriott, 1200 Hampton St., Columbia

March

Women's History Month

1st Monday, *LWVUS Program Planning Responses due*.

6th Saturday, 10-3:00, *LWVSC Board Meeting*, 1600 St. Julian Place, Columbia. *

15th- 21st *Sunshine Week*, a national initiative to foster dialogue about the importance of open government and freedom of information

16th Tuesday, *Filing opens for SC party primary candidates*

23rd Tuesday, *LWVSC Conservation Lobby Day*, Statehouse, Columbia

30th Tuesday, *Primary candidate filing closes*

30th 7 p.m., *Documentary Film Premiere: Edgewood-Stage of Southern History*; Etherredge Center, USC Aiken.

* All members of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina are welcome to attend LWVSC board meetings.

SAVE THIS DATE:

– APRIL 24, 2010 –

That's right, Saturday, April 24, 2010, is the date for LWVSC State Council.

It's never too early to make plans to attend. State Council is a great opportunity to catch up on issues, approve the LWVSC's annual budget and network with other Leaguers. The LWVSC Board is preparing an interesting, informative and entertaining program. We are working on something big, and will have more information soon, but for now remember to save the date - April 24, 2010.

S.C. WATER

continued from page 4 –

bottoms may cross streams. For example, facilities in Savannah are pulling groundwater from a South Carolina aquifer, under the Savannah River, as well as from Georgia. The paths of some other aquifers in South Carolina cross rivers naturally, without being pumped by humans.

The following descriptions of aquifers are based on the *S.C. DHEC South Carolina Water Use Report, 2006 Annual Summary*, pages 3-6:

- In general, wells in the Blue Ridge and Piedmont regions yield little water when compared to wells drilled in the Coastal Plain, owing to the inherently low porosity and permeability of the crystalline rock present in the upstate.
- The Coastal plains are underlain by soil layers of succeeding depth, some layers being permeable and some, impermeable. These layers are saturated with water, beginning

at a varied depth called the water table. The permeable layers will produce flows of water in wells and are called aquifers. Coastal Plain aquifers include the following, stated based on increasing depth as measured at the coast: Surficial Aquifer System, Tertiary Limestone/Sand Aquifer System (Floridan Aquifer System), Black Mingo Aquifer, and Middendorf Aquifer. Each aquifer generally begins at ground surface some distance from the coast (as far as the fall line) and is covered by one or more impermeable layers and shallower aquifer(s) as it slopes downward toward the coast. These aquifers all produce significant flows to wells at some locations in the S.C. Coastal Plain. Below the above aquifers is the Cape Fear Aquifer. However, the quality of water in this aquifer is poor, and the aquifer is very little used in South Carolina.

Times are Tough – Help Us Save Money

Make sure your email address is in the League's records!

Postage is expensive. We still have many League members who have not provided us with an email address. Postage continues to go up every year and we would like to use electronic messaging as much as possible for newsletters, etc. Also, if we do not have email addresses we cannot contact our members quickly when important issues arise and we need to act immediately. We are a grass roots organization operating on a shoestring and every member and every voice counts. If you have not done so already, please provide your email address to your local League president or state president (Barbara Zia - ziab1@comcast.net).

As always, a big thank you to all our members for all you do to advance informed participation in our democracy.



LWV SC Voter

Post Office Box 8453
Columbia, SC 29202

The SC Voter

Winter 2010
Volume 61 Issue 3

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.

President: Barbara Zia
Editor: Laurel Suggs
Published by: *The League of Women Voters of SC*
PO Box 8453
Columbia, SC 29202
Phone & Fax:
(803) 251-2726
Website: www.lwvsc.org

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LWV Newsmakers in South Carolina



Dot Scott Wins Award For Leadership.

League leaders in South Carolina not only strengthen the League, they also make democracy work better for everyone in our state. **Dot Scott,**

LWV/Charleston Area Board

Director, exemplifies that spirit. Dot serves as **Charleston Branch NAACP President** and was honored last July at the NAACP National Convention in New York City with that organization's Rupert Richardson Memorial Leadership award.

Dot received the award for her leadership in expanding and diversifying the membership of the Branch, establishing a staffed office, increasing the Youth Council's outreach, and for her collaborative work with other grassroots groups in building successful opposition to private school choice legislation. She told the *Post and Courier* what thrilled her most was that the award was for "the kind of things I am most proud of," such as the fact that a quarter of the new members she has brought into the Charleston Branch are not black.

Duncan Buell Chairs EAC Workgroup.

Duncan Buell, LWV/Columbia member, LWVSC webmaster and consultant to LWVSC on electronic voting, has been appointed as IEEE (Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers) representative to the Technical Guidelines Development Committee of the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. He will chair the workgroup. Duncan recently spent two days at NIST (National Institute for Standards and Technology) in Gaithersburg, MD, at a workshop on a common data format for voting systems, the focus of his workgroup. The purpose of a common data format would be to standardize how voter registration databases are represented, contests and candidates represented, etc. He reports that the LWV (especially LWVUS and the LWV of California) was prominently and positively mentioned by several speakers and attendees. Particularly viewed as positive was the League's recent election audit work.