

League of Women Voters of South Carolina

League Leaders Update

January 2010

From Barbara Zia, President

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January 2010 launches a new year and decade--as well as the League of Women Voters' 90th year. The tremendous economic challenges that 2009 presented for our communities, state and nation are expected to continue into the new year. At no other time in our state's history has the League been needed more--to build on successes (such as record voter turnout in 2008) and to champion state policy decisions that will help ensure brighter futures for all who call South Carolina home. This update follows the LWVSC's action-packed January 23rd Board meeting.

Membership & Organization

Update Member Lists by January 31. On January 31 the LWVUS will use your League's report ("summary sheet") on the LWVUS online member database to determine your League's member count for 2010-2011. The report will determine your League's per member payment (PMP) and set your League's delegate count for the LWVUS Convention in June 2010. Remember, to inactivate a member you must change the "A" (active) to "I" (inactive). If you have any questions about this process, contact Betty Taira at LWVUS (202-263-1345 or btaira@lwg.org). Also feel free to contact LWVSC Member Services VP Janie Shipley (janrel@mindspring.com; 864-885-1967), Laurel Suggs (lsuggs@imgsc.com; 803-799-7050) or Barbara Zia (ziab1@comcast.net; 803-251-2726) for help. While you are updating your online member roster, do check to see that there are correct email addresses and phone numbers for your members. And be sure to update membership expiration dates.

Membership Expiration Dates. This is a quick suggestion for the expiration date for your members on the LWVUS online database. Most Leagues bill for dues in the fall for membership beginning in January. LWVUS uses the membership totals on the database in early February for the next year's Per-Member-Payment (PMP). We recommend that you use the last day of the year as the expiration date for each paid member. For example, if a member paid in November 2009, his or her expiration date would be updated to 12/31/10. Thus, every person's record would be updated as s/he pays. When the membership drive in the fall is over and every member has been asked to rejoin, any members not rejoining would be changed to INACTIVE on the database, their expiration date would not be updated, and they would not be included in the membership totals for LWVUS and LWVSC when it comes to PMP.

National League President Mary Wilson Visits South Carolina. Mary Wilson visited Columbia on January 14 as part of her "road trip" to the Carolinas to meet with League members and leaders, advocate for passage of vital climate change legislation, and speak with the media about the League's ongoing efforts in this and other areas. In South Carolina Mary and LWVSC leaders met with staff from Senator Graham's office and Representative Clyburn's office. After our legislative meetings, we held a press conference at the Statehouse with members of the South Carolina Legislative Women's Caucus and researchers from the University of South Carolina. Click [here](#) to read the Oxfam report "Exposed." The event was exciting and

generated some great press for Mary's trip and the League's work on climate change. Mary Wilson and Mary Klenz, LWVUS board director from Charlotte, then joined about 25 members of the South Carolina League for a delightful meal and conversation. After an exciting day in Columbia Mary and Mary (the "Dynamic Duo") sped off to North Carolina to continue the tour.

Membership & Leadership Development Opportunity. Are you interested in techniques to help build membership in your local League? Do you want your League to go from Good to Great? South Carolina has been chosen as one of the states in which LWVUS is supporting the Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI). We will soon be inviting local Leagues to participate in this project. Special training for participating Leagues will be held in Summer 2010. Further information will be forthcoming, so keep an eye out!

LWVSC will be selecting 2 or 3 members who will be trained as state coaches to work in-state with local Leagues. The training for the state coaching team will take place in Memphis on April 16-18. LWVUS will pay costs for the April training in Memphis, as well as for in-state training. Please contact Janie Shipley (janrel@mindspring.com; 864-885-1967) if you would like to suggest one of your members to serve on the state coaching team. For the state coaching team we are seeking members who are willing to serve two-year terms, committed to the League in South Carolina--to its mission and growth--and who are effective leaders in their Leagues.

Big Changes on the LWVSC Board. According to LWVSC Bylaws, board vacancies that occur between state conventions are to be filled by appointment of the Board. At the January 23rd meeting, the following changes were made:

Laurel Suggs was appointed Vice President for Voters Service/Citizen Education.

JoAnne Day was appointed Vice President for Issues and Action.

Carole Cato was appointed Legislative Action Director. Carole is a member of the LWV/Columbia Area and also co-chairs LWVSC's Voter Access Action Committee.

JoAnne and Laurel already were serving on the Board in other positions, so only shifted their roles. We are delighted to welcome Carole to the Board and grateful to all our state leaders for sharing their talents with the League. Our South Carolina League leadership "bench" is very deep!

Thinking about Local League Annual Meetings. At local League annual meetings each spring members adopt a budget and a program of study and action for the coming year, and elect officers and directors who will carry out the League's mission and the membership's direction. Consult your local League bylaws for specifics. Information about Program Planning meetings can be found below.

Your Nominating and Budget Committees should be at work to help prepare for annual meetings. LWVSC does not anticipate needing to request an increase in the Per Member Payment (PMP) for 2010-2011. However, we don't know yet if LWVUS will request a PMP increase for 2010-2012. Any change from the current LWVUS PMP rate would be voted on at the LWVUS convention in June. If you have any questions about preparing for annual meeting, please contact Peggy Appler, LWVSC Community Relations VP (843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com).

LWVSC Council--April 24 in Columbia. This biennial meeting is a day of fun and learning for

Leaguers from across South Carolina. Mark your calendars and watch your mail for detailed information. A special feature of 2010 Council will be opportunities for membership and leadership development.

LWVUS Convention--June 11-15 in Atlanta. Ask anyone who's ever gone--A national League convention is an unforgettable learning experience. In 2010 South Carolina Leaguers won't have to travel very far to enjoy the LWVUS biennial convention. Check www.lwv.org/ForMembers/Convention for details, including program planning materials and information about the number of voting delegates that local Leagues can send (1-99 members=1 delegate; 100-199 members=2 delegates). Keep in mind: Local Leagues that aren't sending their allotted number of delegates can allow another League to represent them. Thus there may be opportunities for League members from the Southeast to use delegate slots for Leagues from across the US that won't be sending members to convention due to the distance. And any League member may attend as a non-voting observer. Voting delegates are appointed by local League boards.

League Business Cards. A business card template is available along with several other items you might find helpful for your League activities. You can find these items on the LWVUS website:

http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Membership_Recruitment_Initiative&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=13802

Attractive business cards are easy to print from the template using your own printer and are handy for League leaders to carry.

League Membership Brochures. A MS Word template for creating handy, pocket- or purse-size membership brochures is available from Janie Shipley (janrel@mindspring.com or 864-885-1967). Leagues can personalize the brochure with their local activities and contact information. They're perfect for displaying at libraries and LWV events. No Leaguer should go anywhere without them!

Need Speakers? State League leaders are available to speak to local Leagues on their specialty areas. Whatever your interest--from advocacy to water and everything in between (sorry, but no X, Y & Z topics are currently available)--we can help you find a speaker or plan a program. Contact Peggy Appler (843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com) for details.

Citizen Education

LWVSC Amicus Brief on Judicial Selection. The SC Supreme Court granted LWVSC's petition to file and has accepted our Petition regarding Original Jurisdiction in a case that challenges the constitutionality of the way in which judges are selected in South Carolina. At the same time the Court denied the Petition filed by the SC Bar. Please note: Our petition does not address the qualifications of the judge who brought the suit; rather, our concern deals with the process of judicial selection. This is an issue in which LWVSC has demonstrated interest and concern over many years. LWVSC can take great pride that 1) we weighed in, 2) we did a good job of addressing the issues that allowed us to be granted permission to file, and 3) our stature is important enough for the court to want to hear from us. Thanks to Prof. Constance

Anastopoulos, Charleston School of Law and LWV Charleston Area vice president, for her help. To read more about the LWVSC's action, visit <http://www.lwvsc.org/amicusbrief.html>. 2010 Candidates Debates and Forums. In this busy election year no group will be busier than the LWV. Planning is underway for LWVSC to partner with SC AARP and WISTV on televised gubernatorial debates (2 primary; 1 general election). WIS would make the debates available to its Raycom partner stations in other parts of the state. Local Leagues are encouraged to sponsor debates for races in their districts, including elections for US Congress. TV and radio stations are often eager to partner with local Leagues in their media markets on candidates forums/debates. Local Leagues may want to consider collaborating on a debate for a legislative district that they share. Contact Laurel Suggs with suggestions or questions (lsuggs@imgsc.com; 803-799-7050).

Advocacy 101 Handbook is online at <http://www.lwvsc.org/files/lwvadvocacymanual.pdf>. This free LWVSC publication is an essential tool for anyone who wants to advocate on state legislative issues. Hard copies will also be available at Legislative Advocacy Day and by contacting Peggy Appler (843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com).

Know Your State. The 2009 update of LWVSC's acclaimed "Know Your State: South Carolina Government" is available for purchase. KYS is offered to League members at a special price of \$5 per copy. They make the perfect gift for speakers at League meetings. Some local Leagues are selling copies at their events as a fundraiser. Contact Peggy Appler at 843-688-5171 or dappler@homesc.com to order.

Openness in Government: Sunshine Week 2010 begins March 15. The LWV is committed to government at all levels that is open and transparent and provides for citizen participation. As part of that effort we observe Sunshine Week every year. On Friday, March 19, from 12:00 to 2:00 PM (ET), the LWVEF will co-host the 5th Annual Sunshine Week National Dialogue. The event will focus on transparency in the Obama administration – what has changed and what remains to be done. Norm Eisen, special counsel to the President for ethics and government reform, is a confirmed panelist and others (inside and outside government) have been invited to participate. The event will be broadcast live via the web. Local Leagues are encouraged to host “viewing parties” in their communities. Watch weekly LWVUS Leaders’ Updates for details.

Issues and Action

Program Planning. We hope your calendar includes a member meeting to plan the study and action that your local League will undertake in the coming year and that LWVUS will tackle in the 2010-2012 biennium.

2010 is LWVUS convention year when local Leagues undertake program planning for national League as well as their local League. You'll find the complete info, including the electronic reporting form, at http://www.lwv.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=For_Members. To submit your local League's National League program planning results electronically you'll need to enter your League's ID. Note that only electronic submissions are permitted this year. Complete online instructions are provided. March 1 is the reporting deadline. During your program planning meetings you may want to consider these proposals for new LWVUS studies:

- role of the federal government in public education, proposed by LWV Palo Alto and other Leagues in California

- a federal cabinet level Department of Peace, proposed by LWV Columbia/Boone County (MO)

If you have any questions or would like a copy of the above study proposals, please contact Barbara Zia (ziab1@comcast.net).

Legislative Advocacy Day, Tuesday, February 23. Again this year LWVSC is co-sponsoring LAD with SC AAUW and SC School Improvement Council, with Jean Norman as coordinator. An exciting program is planned on the theme of how health and environment impact the school achievement of South Carolina's children. Complete information can be found in the Winter SC VOTER and at <http://www.lwvsc.org/files/legdav2010.pdf>. We will also do a state-wide member mailing.

Take Action! LWVSC is now utilizing Capwiz (Capitol Advantage) to alert members to take action on LWV priority issues. LWVSC received free use of Capwiz as part of the LWV Education Fund's Public Advocacy for Voter Protection Project. PAPV is designed to help bolster the League's capacity for continuing and expanding its critical state-based advocacy in order to prevent the disenfranchisement of eligible citizens, particularly underserved populations. LWVSC's action project in support of increasing voter access allows us to participate.

Our first action alert using the new system--asking members to urge their state senators to oppose Point of Sale legislation--was sent this month. We will soon call on members to take action on voter photo ID (we oppose) and cigarette tax (we support) bills. Be assured that alerts will only be sent on legislation that falls under LWVSC's action priorities. Now that the SC General Assembly is back in session our policy specialists and advocacy team are busy trying to keep up with the action.

Leagues with websites can direct visitors to the LWVSC Capwiz site where they can find a number of web tools, including how to reach their elected officials and LWVSC action alerts. That URL is <http://www.capwiz.com/lwv/sc/home/>.

Calling All Education Advocates! Sheila Gallagher, LWVSC K-12 education director, has organized a meeting for Leaguers with SC School Board Association Executive Director Dr. Paul Krohne and other SCSBA staff. The meeting takes place at 10:00, February 9, at SCSBA's office, 1027 Barnwell Street, Columbia. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss education issues, including funding formulas, in terms of how to advocate for LWVSC's education agenda. Kindly share this information with your members who have an interest in public education. Ask them to contact Sheila if they can attend (scgjune@aol.com; 843-615-0996).

LWVSC Water Study. The Water Study Committee is hard at work researching where our state's water comes from and where it goes. Aply co-chaired by Mullen Taylor and Joan Kinne-Shulman, committee members are preparing reports on various issues around water supply and planning an excellent panel discussion for the April 24th LWVSC Council meeting. The committee's reports will be published in LWVSC's newsletter and posted at the website. The first report by Andy Yacinsac on where SC's water comes from appears in the Winter SC VOTER. Committee members will be submitting consensus questions to local Leagues for their consideration at member meetings in Fall and Winter 2010, and will serve as resources to local Leagues during the study. Results from the consensus process will be acted on by League

members at the 2011 LWVSC convention.

Legislative Interviews. We hope you received the state legislator questionnaire that was emailed to local League presidents and Member-at-Large Unit chairs. Many thanks for your help in interviewing state legislators on LWVSC priority policy issues. Please contact JoAnne Day at jvday@yahoo.com with questions or comments. This is a great opportunity for local Leagues and legislators to get to know one another over conversations on public policy issues. Whether or not you use the state League's legislative questionnaire to guide your discussion, the important thing is to establish face-to-face relationships with your legislators. LWVSC mails the SC VOTER to each and every state legislator. And experience shows that they read it. If you don't already do so, consider mailing your local League newsletter to your local, SC and US legislators.

Child Welfare. Janet Marsh, LWVSC Child Welfare Director, advises members to check out "The Children's Budget, Behind the Numbers: Devastating Budget Cuts and Their impact on the Lives of South Carolina's Children." This report describes budget cuts in 9 SC state agencies since 2006 and the devastating impacts the cuts are having on children and their families. The report offers useful information on agencies and services and cuts across a number of LWVSC issue areas: healthcare, education, child welfare, juvenile justice, etc. It was released in January 2010 by Focus on Kids, a Project of The SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center. Go to <http://www.scjustice.org/brochuresmanuals.html>; click Focus on Kids.

The LWVSC Board meets next on March 6, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Laurel Suggs' office, IMG, 1600 St. Julian Place, Columbia. All League members are welcome to attend.

Last but not least, the Winter SC VOTER should have arrived in members' mailboxes. Please alert Laurel Suggs about any delivery problems (lsuggs@imgsc.com).

Please share this information with your members and post in your newsletter as appropriate. Thanks for all you do to make democracy work. It's going to be another great year!