

League of Women Voters of South Carolina

League Leaders Update

March 2010

From Barbara Zia, President

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Hello, South Carolina League Leaders. This March brings the all-important U.S. Census mailing, Women's History Month, buds bursting and birds nesting. It also brings League rites of spring--our local League annual meetings and, in even-numbered years, LWVSC's biennial Council meeting.

Here is some news from our March 6th state League Board meeting and beyond that I hope you can use. Please share with your leadership team and members.

Issues and Action

LWVSC Conservation Lobby Day will be March 23rd. We invite you to join us at the S.C. 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.

Climate Change and South Carolina. Interested in a fascinating presentation for a member meeting? Consider inviting managers from South Carolina's National Wildlife Refuges (Ernest F. Hollings ACE Basin, Cape Romain, Santee, Waccamaw) to speak about the climate change impacts they are observing in our state's fragile wildlife refuges. Recently, Project Leader Raye Nilius enthralled Charleston Area Leaguers and friends with a presentation and is eager to speak to other Leagues as well. Her slide presentation dramatically documents climate change in our state. You can reach Raye at 843-928-3264 or Raye.Nilius@fws.gov.

LWVSC School District Study. Study Chair Holley Ulbrich's new report on school district organization and governance in South Carolina is posted at <http://www.lwvsc.org/whatsnew.html>.

Action Alerts. LWVSC is in process of switching our action alert system from Capwiz to Salsa. JoAnne Day and Eleanor Hare will take the training for the new system. During the change-over there may be an interruption in our ability to send out alerts. However, Salsa appears to offer more versatility in messages that we can send. Our participation in the LWVUS Public Advocacy for Voter Protection allows us to access Salsa (and Capwiz) at no cost.

LWV Buttons. We ordered metal buttons with the LWV logo that are perfect for Leaguers to wear when visiting public officials and observing meetings. The buttons will be available at an affordable price at LWVSC Council on April 24.

Citizen Education

LWVSC Amicus Brief on Judicial Selection. On March 2, the S.C. Supreme Court heard arguments in the case of Segars-Andrews v. Judicial Merit Selection Commission, et al. LWVSC filed an Amicus Curiae Brief in the case, written by League member Prof. Constance Anastopoulo of the Charleston School of Law. The Brief did not address the individual qualifications of Judge Segars-Andrews; rather it addressed the issues of the constitutionality of the process of judicial selection in South Carolina and the importance of judicial independence. A ruling in the case is expected in the next few weeks.

2010 Candidates Debates and Forums. 2010 will be a busy election year for 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).

We are also planning a voter registration/turnout drive to be conducted for school districts. For details, stay tuned and attend the special session on the initiative at the April 24th LWVSC Council.

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.

Membership & Organization

LWVSC Council is set for Saturday, April 24, in Columbia. A call-to-council with an agenda and registration information is being sent this week to League presidents and MAL chairs via email and post. It will also be posted at www.lwvsc.org.

I hope you will attend the 2010 LWVSC Council and encourage others in your leadership team and membership to join us for an exciting day of fun, learning and networking. All LWV members from South Carolina are welcome to attend Council. LWVSC Bylaws specify that each local League can send three voting delegates and an unlimited number of nonvoting guests. Local Leagues assign official delegate status to members, usually at a board meeting. Note that if your League has a member or members who serve on the LWVSC Board of Directors, those members are delegates who represent the state board, and aren't counted against your local League delegate allocation.

The LWV stands for the active, informed participation of citizens in democratic processes at all levels of government. What better way to exercise that democratic right and responsibility than in the grassroots governance of the League? Join us for Council!

Getting to Great. LWVSC was chosen as one of 10 new state Leagues to participate in the national League's Membership Recruitment Initiative (MRI) during 2010-2012. You may recall that LWV/Spartanburg County was a local League that took part in the MRI previously. At the 2009 LWVSC Convention, the Spartanburg League won the award for having the greatest membership growth in South Carolina. In fact, over the past three years, through the MRI, there's been growth among the 10 states and the nearly 50 local Leagues that have participated.

The MRI is an innovating approach that was developed, tested and refined by LWVUS to strengthen League capacity by attracting new members and new leaders. Leadership development components are being added to the MRI program to support League needs. There are two key elements to successful outreach and growth – one, offering training and two, providing regular monthly coaching.

We are honored to have Shayna Howell from the LWV/Charleston selected as one of 12 LWVUS Ruth S. Shur Fellows (national MRI coaches). The competition was fierce and the application process was rigorous, but Shayna was chosen to be part of this important effort. We are proud of her!

South Carolina local Leagues are urged to join this opportunity to grow and strengthen the League. A session at Council will show how you and your League can participate in this successful model for organizational and leadership growth. Janie Shipley, LWVSC Member Services VP and MRI Coordinator, will lead a presentation that includes Shayna and our three state coaches--Joyce Franklin, LWV/Darlington County; Rebecca Lambert, LWV Greenville County; Sue Myers, LWV/Georgetown County. Our state coaching team will be just back from three days of regional training in Charlotte and will have lots of information to share with us.

Celebrations of the LWV's 90th birthday are ongoing. I was honored to attend the LWV/Hilton Head Island's event on February 28. Over 60 members and guests gathered to celebrate and honor former State Representative Harriet Keyserling with LWVHHI's Making Democracy Work award.

Governor Sanford proclaimed February 14, 2010, as *League of Women Voters 90th Anniversary Day*. And the S.C. House of Representatives, through the initiative of the Legislative Women's Caucus will honor the League's 90th anniversary with a House

resolution. The presentation will be made at the Women's Caucus annual luncheon in Columbia on March 24.

Annual Meeting Preparations. As Leagues begin to focus their attention on annual meetings, leaders are encouraged to review the tips for "successful annual meetings," available [here](#). Also, Leagues may want to review the information on decision making by electronic means as bylaws are reviewed and possibly amended. Please remember to update your new officers' information in the LWVUS database. If you need assistance in doing this, please e-mail membership@lww.org or review the online database manual (available [here](#)).

Budgeting for FY2011. In drafting your local League's budget for the coming year please note that the state budget proposed by the LWVSC Budget Committee does not include an increase in the state League Per-Member-Payment. LWVSC's PMP has not been raised for several years and is one of the lowest among state Leagues. We are able to control costs by having no paid staff or physical office. LWVSC is managed carefully by all-volunteer leaders who give generously of their time and resources--just like our local Leagues.

However, LWVUS is asking for approval from delegates at Convention in June to raise national PMP for FY2011 by sixty cents and an additional forty cents for FY2012. In addition, the LWVUS Committee will recommend that the \$5.00 per nationally recruited member (NRM) rebate be eliminated in the FY2011 budget. LWVUS is moving toward the goal of eliminating the concept of nationally recruited members, so all members will eventually join at the local League level.

If you need assistance with budget preparation, feel free to contact LWVSC Treasurer Dianne Haselton (email dhs1tn@nctv.com or phone 864-654-4316), or LWVSC Budget Committee Chair Sharon Fennell (email rsfennell@mindspring.com or phone 864-654-5961).

A fun- and learning-packed LWVUS Convention is planned for June 11-15 in Atlanta. Highlights include a session on diversity in the courts and workshops on the Membership Recruitment Initiative that LWVSC is part of. And Peggy Brown is organizing a caucus on environmental issues for southeastern Leagues. Please take a look at convention information at http://www.lww.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Council_and_Convention&Template=/TaggedPage/TaggedPageDisplay.cfm&TPLID=155&ContentID=14677. The number of delegates allowed for a local League depends on its membership count on February 1. Put simply, each local League can send one voting delegate for its first 99 members; thereafter a League can send an additional delegate for each additional 100 members. Each state League can send 3 voting delegates. Local and state League boards select voting delegates; an unlimited number of members can attend as nonvoting observers. Local Leagues not sending their full allotment of delegates can allow members of another League to use their slots. Let me know if you have questions (Barbara Zia at 803-251-2726 or ziab1@comcast.net). Following Council on April 24 there will be a briefing session on LWVUS Convention.

The Spring SC VOTER will be mailed to members in mid-April.

In closing, please let me know if I or anyone else on the LWVSC leadership team can assist with your preparations for annual meeting, including budgeting, nominating committees, program planning, or board training. We'll be happy to help.

