



Calendar

December

Sat	13	11:00 – 1:00 Local Author Showcase at Richland Library Main Branch. See page 6 for details Holiday Member & Guest Social: Home of Pat Forbis 1620 Adger Rd., Columbia. 6:30 p.m. See details on the right.
Wed	31	Due date for Membership Renewal

January 2015

Mon	5	.LWVCA board meeting, 5:30 p.m. Location: TBD
Thu	15	Public Policy Luncheon, 11:45 a.m.; Lourie Center, State Legislative Issues Update
Wed	28	Ethics Reform 6-8 p.m. (see Page 7)
Sat	31	LEAD Day (League Education and Advocacy Day) in Columbia

February

TBD		Program Planning Meeting
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April

Sat - Sun	25 - 26	SC State Convention
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WHAT'S INSIDE?

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**HOLIDAY MEMBER & GUEST SOCIAL
DECEMBER 13, 2014 - 6:30 P.M.**

Please come and enjoy our annual Holiday celebration Social for Members and Guests to be held at the Home of Pat Forbis

***1620 Adger Road
Columbia, SC**



Bring a heavy appetizers or desserts to share and please bring a friend or two!



Please RSVP to Susan James at sc.susanbjames@gmail.com or 256-6822 no later than Wednesday, December 10th.

***Pat's house is at the end of Adger. Take a left off Trenholm Rd., heading east past the Trenholm Road United Methodist Church. Pat's house is on the right.**



What's Inside Highlights

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NEWSLETTER CHANGES: The *League Lines* team is considering a new column to include in future issues of *League Lines* to profile one of our members and to announce member accomplishments, awards, and community service.

We are also inviting members to submit written articles of timely and relevant interest to the Columbia Area League, beginning in **February 2015**.

If there is a League leader you wish to know more about, or if you are a long-time League member who wishes to share your passion or interest with other members, please let us know. We ask that you limit your submissions to no more than 225 words. All submissions are subject to review and edit and should adhere to the Communication Policy of the LWVCA.

Please do not submit articles for use for commercial or partisan politics or similar purposes.

THE PREZ SEZ**Martha Roblee**

Although the focus of this month's President's letter is to provide a debrief on the recent election, I would like to begin by echoing the sentiments recently expressed by our National League President Elizabeth MacNamara – **"if you voted this year or helped others in your community cast their votes, thank you!"**

From my perspective the biggest takeaway from this year's midterm elections is the historically low voter turnout. Various media outlets reported nationwide turnout of 36.6%, the lowest since WWII, and exit polls showed only 13% of the voters were under 30. In South Carolina, the State Election Commission reported a statewide turnout of 43.6% of registered voters – better than the national average, but still the lowest in at least 40 years for a general election in South Carolina and approximately 8 points less than the 2010 election. The number of South Carolina voters under the age 30 has not been officially reported, but exit polling indicates a 10% turnout, much worse than the national average.

These statistics can be disheartening to members of the LWV, whose volunteers work tirelessly to register new voters, with a special focus on young people and newly naturalized citizens. We also work hard to provide nonpartisan information on candidates through debates, forums, and online voters' guides, and in some cases, serve as poll workers and poll monitors. The positive news is that we can count on the League to take a leadership role to conduct further analysis of the election results in order to identify what actions can be taken to better engage eligible voters.

To that end, I recently attended an election debriefing meeting of the South Carolina Statewide Voter Advocacy Partnership ("SCVAP"), an initiative sponsored by the State League. With our partners we discussed what went right and what can be improved.

Topics discussed included understanding the impact on the elections resulting from gerrymandered districts, the number of provisional votes cast due to recurring issues with the DMV's processing of voter registrations and changes in address, confusion caused by changes in precinct locations, accessibility issues experienced by voters with disabilities, and the cynicism expressed by young voters believing their vote does not matter. Although there are no easy answers to many of the barriers identified at the meeting, for the short-term it was agreed that working subcommittees could be formed to address the DMV processing issues and the accessibility issues experienced by disabled voters. Longer term action is most likely required, however, to address such issues as the deadline date for voter registration and how best to engage younger voters.

What I do know is how vital the League and its volunteer members are to the voting process and how grateful I am that the League provides me with the opportunity to participate in initiatives such as the SCVAP. It is those types of investments by our members and partners that will make our Democracy work better in the future by helping us to build on the successes and fix the issues.

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Public Policy Luncheon November 20, 2014 Recap – Pam Craig

Pat Forbis introduced our guest speaker, Melissa Reed, VP for Public Policy and Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Health System and Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina Action Funds. Approximately six years ago, Ms. Reed came to Planned Parenthood Health System, whose name will soon change to Planned Parenthood South Atlantic, encompassing South and North Carolina, West Virginia and part of Virginia, to continue her fight to defend the rights of those less fortunate, as she had done in the past working for an organization protecting battered women. To add to her credentials, Ms. Reed recently passed the North Carolina bar.

Ms. Reed spoke to us of what we might see in upcoming S.C. legislation. South Carolina, under the sponsorship of Senator Lee Bright, is considering laws similar to those in Texas which were requiring abortion clinic doctors to have certification and hospital admitting privileges. Though this law was struck down in Texas, Ms. Reed anticipates the possibility that Senator Bright might do some tweaking and reintroduce the bills. The refusal of our Governor to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, is another roadblock to limiting women's access to affordable healthcare, including birth control. It is estimated that 99% of all women use some form of birth control at some stage in their life, and, yet, the average female pays approximately \$600 in out of pocket expenses per year. That should be compared with FREE Viagra.

One of the biggest threats to women's reproductive choices was the recent Hobby Lobby decision. In this decision, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that family-owned corporations are no longer required to pay for insurance coverage for contraception under the ACA, stating that it violated a federal law protecting their religious freedom. Ms. Reed warned that this decision could open the doors to many challenges from corporations over laws they claim violate their religious freedom (e.g., blood transfusions or vaccinations).

When you add in the U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down the Massachusetts' law that provided 35-foot buffer zones around entrances to clinics performing abortions you begin to sense that women themselves are under attack. If you throw in laws limiting abortions at 20 weeks and attempts to pass bills that give fertilized eggs the same rights as individuals, the barrage to regulate women's reproductive rights seems relentless. For that reason, Melissa and others like her are our troops in the battlefield called the State House.

The troops are preparing for a battle, once the legislation is in session, to support a bill that requires sex education to be medically accurate and to provide a definition of what is "medically accurate". Let's hope it doesn't fall in line with "minimally adequate" because that could mean a twenty year fight.

As part of the fight, in March, PPH will have their fund raiser. It's an award ceremony in honor of Barbara Moxon, an advocate of Planned Parenthood and former League president, so keep your calendar clear and be ready.

Pam Craig

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ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES:

ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE: By **Chester Sansbury, Environmental Coordinator**

Our Small Creeks Are Valuable – and our students will be teaching us!

Small creeks that flow through our neighborhoods serve a very useful purpose. They provide serenity, habitat for aquatic dependent creatures, and receptors for storm water. They also aid in flood prevention, are a great place for kids to play and explore our natural world, and enhance property values. I'm glad to see that students at Leaphart Elementary school in my Lexington County neighborhood will be studying Kinley Creek watershed after being selected as a DHEC Champions of the Environment grant winner. The Creek drains areas around Irmo and Harbison and passes next to Whitehall subdivision, an area of over 1200 homes, passes under St. Andrews Road, meanders through a conservation area next to Shaw Industries, and connects to the Lower Saluda River. Perhaps the students will be able to discover some sources of pollution in the watershed which cause bacterial levels to skyrocket in the Creek after storms. Here's some info from the DHEC web site about the approved project:

Students will take part in the development of a [Watershed Based Plan](#) for the Kinley Creek Watershed. First, an existing conditions inventory will be performed to study the natural history of the watershed, and maps will be created to illustrate land use, land cover, flood plain boundaries, stream networks and storm water infrastructure. Next, students will implement storm water management practices such as harvesting rainwater, creating rain gardens, and conducting public awareness campaigns. Finally, students will design and develop interpretive materials for placement at Seven Oaks Park and Leaphart Elementary School.

Leaphart Elementary School, an engineering magnet school, will partner with the Central Midlands Council of Governments, Irmo Chapin Recreation Commission, and Lexington and Richland Countywide Storm water Consortiums. This partnership will enhance Leaphart's engineering based curriculum by giving students the chance to work on a real world civil and environmental engineering project alongside environmental professionals.

Chester Sansbury

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MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

AWARENESS: **Martha** as President of the LWV of the Columbia Area and **Rosalyn Glenn** as Chairperson, Social Action Committee of Richland County Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (and Treasurer of LWVCA) spoke on the November 2nd *Awareness* program about barriers to voting and “Everything you need to know before going to the polls”. It is still interesting and was very well presented – view at <https://www.facebook.com/Awareness10>

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Local Author Showcase – Richland County Library Main Branch, 1431 Assembly Street, December 13th – 11 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Pat Manley, Director and League Lines Art & Production Editor, is participating in this event to showcase her first novel, *FORWARD/REWIND* – a story of remembrance, change, and reinvention. Stop by and chat with Pat about her book. Pat will have copies of her book for purchase and is happy to sign one for you!

Come discover great books written by talented locals. Meet and mingle with authors, and do some holiday shopping. From poetry and history to inspirational books and mysteries, there is something for everyone.

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Thanks to your efforts and support Richland County voters passed a \$59 million bond referendum in November 2013 to update library locations by adding and configuring space, technology and resources to better fit the way customers need and use the library.

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COLUMBIA TEAM WINS USTA STATE TITLE: The Columbia Tennis League 65 and over, 3.0 Men's Team of Rick Nuzum, Woody Harris, Jerry Odom (Captain), Mike Caulder, C.J. Cambre, and **Andy Yasinsac** won its division of the USTA S.C. state league championship at Hilton Head over the weekend of November 8. The team beat the Lowcountry Tennis Association in the final. All the 65 and over champions are invited to next month's USTA Southern Section championship in Dothan, Ala. There, the teams will compete to play at the first USTA 65 and Over National Championships, scheduled for next March in Surprise, Arizona.

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OTHER NEWS AND NOTIFICATIONS!



DUES: If you have not already paid your dues, please do so ASAP so that we can balance our books and pay our share to National and the State.

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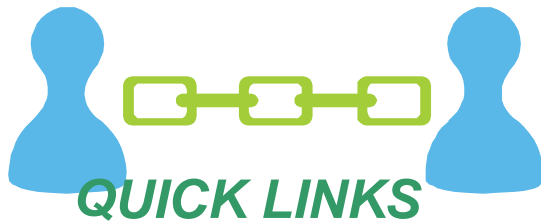
ETHICS REFORM: Please mark your calendars for an important reception and panel discussion in Columbia on ethics reform, co-sponsored by the State League, the Columbia Community Relations Council, the Coastal Conservation League and AARP of SC. It is intended to educate both legislators and the public, and is scheduled for Wednesday, January 28th, from 6-8 p.m. at the Greater Columbia Chamber of Commerce Building, 930 Richland Street, Columbia. Panelists will be Attorney General Alan Wilson, Senate Judiciary Chair Larry Martin, House Majority Chair Bruce Bannister, and House member Beth Bernstein.

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Have You Caught the *COMET* Yet? Our transit system has new, smaller buses, new routes and additional riders. In addition to this exciting news, they have just launched a mobile app that allows you to pay your fare, plan your ride, and track your bus right from your phone! [Catch The Comet Info](#)

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Websites:

National: www.lwv.org/

State: <http://lwvsc.org/>

Columbia: www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Facebook: To see our Facebook Page:

1. Go to YOUR Facebook page and search for the name Bria Tate. [This is the alias that will "travel" with the League's Facebook page.]
2. Choose the "Bria Tate" with the LWV Logo.
3. Send a FRIEND request to Bria Tate and it will be accepted. You are then connected to the *LWV Columbia Area Facebook page*.

Twitter:

1. Go to YOUR Twitter account and search for the League of Women Voters Columbia Area and connect.

Facebook and Twitter email address:
leagueofwomenvoterscolumbia@gmail.com

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 **VOTER INFORMATION WEBSITES** 

www.saveallvotessc.org

www.VOTE411.org

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Columbia City Council

1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM City Hall
 1737 Main Street Columbia, SC 29201
 Check website at www.columbiasc.net for more information.



Lexington County Council

Meet: 2nd and 4th Tuesdays at 4:30 PM
 2nd Floor County Administration Building 212 South Lake Drive Lexington, SC 29072

For confirmation of meeting dates, please call 785-8103 or check website

www.lex-co.com



Richland County Council

Meet: 1st and 3rd Tuesdays at 6:00 PM 2nd Floor County Administration Building 2020 Hampton Street Columbia, SC 29202

For more information, please contact the Clerk of Council Office @ (803) 576-2061 or check:
www.richlandonline.com/departments/countycouncil/index.asp or www.rcgov.us



LWVCA BOARD MEMBERS &

DIRECTORS

Officers: Martha Roblee – President, Julie Sellers - 1st Vice President, Sally Huguley - 2nd Vice President, Alan Roblee – Secretary, Rosalyn Glenn – Treasurer

Directors: Pat Manley - Director/ League Lines Production Editor, Bridget Tripp, Pat Forbis, Sarah Leverette, Pat Mohr, Missy Caughman, Rita Paul - Nominating Committee

Off Board: Chester Sansbury – Environment, Lill Mood - Transportation; Marilyn Knight - Outreach; Suzanne Rhodes - League Lines; Sej Harman – Communications, Susan James - Reservations; Pam Craig – Membership; Mel Jenkins – Voter Services

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