

League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area



LEAGUE LINES

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Monday, February 4, Board Meeting, Jason’s Deli, 5:30

Thursday, February 14, LWV is 99 years old

Thursday, February 21, Program Planning Meeting, Lourie Center, 11:30 (see [Page 4](#))

Tuesday, March 5, Hollings Library, a new feminism oral history project, time TBD

Thursday, April 18, Public Policy Luncheon, Lourie Center, 11:45: Seth Rose on legislative issues

Friday and Saturday, May 4-5, LWVSC Convention in Charleston

Thursday, May 16, Annual Members Meeting and Social, Place TBD



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VIEW FROM RIVER'S EDGE

Janelle Rivers

VIEW FROM THE RIVERS' EDGE: If you weren't one of the 125 people at the main Richland Library for the forum on redistricting and voting on January 22, you missed an excellent, informative session. Four legislators and two experts on voting, technology, and election-related processes informed us of state and national issues. If you were there, you know you need to act.



Valentine's Day won't be too late. Show your love for democracy by contacting your legislators about two issues that will be decided this year. Good decisions on the following two issues can improve South Carolina's election processes for years to come:

Fair redistricting, versus racial or partisan gerrymandering with incumbency protection:

The legislators, Representatives Gary Clary (R), Kirkman Finlay (R), Beth Bernstein (D), and Senator Mia McLeod (D), reminded the group that creating districts where the great majority of voters think alike leads to fewer meaningful choices for voters because elections become less and less competitive. Extreme candidates can win in the primaries because lack of competitiveness pulls both parties away from moderate positions. Without healthy competition in the general election, voters have little choice but to elect a group of lawmakers who see little need to consider the compromises that allow bills to become laws. Gridlock ensues.

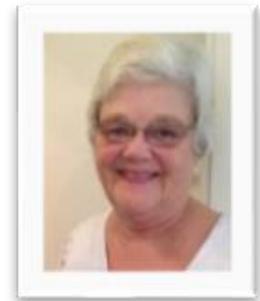
The solution to current gerrymandering is twofold: (1) establish meaningful criteria for drawing districts that do not include protection of incumbents or allow highly partisan gerrymandering, and (2) create a truly independent redistricting commission instead of allowing legislators to draw districts that include their own voters and donors, while excluding potential opponents and constituents they don't want to represent. Legislators who want to preserve their own positions aren't likely to make those changes unless voters demand them.

Join the League's VotersRule2020 blog http://lwvsc.org/files/lwvsc_blog_invitation.pdf and speak up as a constituent to tell your legislators that you want clear, fair criteria, and an independent redistricting commission.

Efficiency and affordability of transparent, auditable voting technology:

Emergency stop signs may be in order for the state's voting technology procurement. The state's request for proposals for a "Voting System Solution" was issued in early December before the legislature began its current session. As Rep. Finlay pointed out during the forum, South Carolina's election system has "over engineered" the voting process.

Interested members of the public who are willing to wade through all the state's procurement requirements can find the state's request for proposals at this link: <http://webprod.cio.sc.gov/SCSolicitationWeb/contractSearch.do?solicitationnumber=5400016872>



According to the published schedule, the deadline for potential bidders to submit questions was 1/7/19, and the state should have responded to bidders' questions by 1/11/19. Bids are due 3/4/19, and the award is to be announced 5/1/19. As is typical with the procurement process, information about the bids and the evaluators is confidential.

What matters here is what's missing from the state's request. South Carolina's iVotronic computers have a troubled history. Independent organizations and individuals with substantial expertise in election security have recommended against using them again because of problems with both the design and coding. Human nature being what it is, factors akin to inertia and comfortable relationships could take us to a similar system with similar problems going forward.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) recommends hand-marked paper ballots, optically scanned in each precinct, as the only obvious choice to replace the iVotronic computers. The LWVSC wants a system with these essential features:

- The ballot is marked by the voter (may be assisted by a marking device).
- The voter casts the ballot by feeding the ballot into an optical scanner at the precinct.
- The scanner counts the vote and drops the ballots into a box, where they are retained for a recount or audit.
- The hand-marked paper ballots are the official record of the election.

Furthermore, the League's preferred solution is more economical than the options considered less reliable by our experts. The League supports appropriate accommodations for voters with a variety of handicapping conditions. Our recommendations include providing assistive technology at every precinct.

Read the LWVSC position on voting technology: <http://lwvsc.org/votingtechnology.html#statement>.

Then call or write your legislators and tell them you want a transparent, auditable system with hand-marked paper ballots that are recorded by optical scanner and tabulated in the precinct. The General Assembly can act to ensure a fair, uncompromised procurement based on sound criteria.

The League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area is fortunate to have two members, Prof. Duncan Buell and John Ruoff, Ph.D., who are known nationally and internationally for their expertise in voting procedures, election data, and redistricting. Our continuing gratitude goes to these members who consistently work for high-quality government processes in South Carolina, who regularly provide technical information to the board of the LWVSC, and who both served on the panel for the forum on January 22. I trust these experts and their recommendations. I appreciate the conscientiousness of lawmakers who support transparent, reliable, efficient, auditable election processes that avoid the extra expenses associated with over-engineered technology. If you agree, make the effort to contact your representatives in the South Carolina House and Senate and tell them that we need an emergency stop to fix the criteria for choosing an election system. *_JR, President*



PROGRAM PLANNING 2019: It's that time again! This year we will convene our Annual Program Planning Meeting at the time we would normally have our February Public Policy Luncheon. Please come to the Lourie Center on Thursday, February 21, 2019. We will begin at 11:30 with lunch, and with the meeting at 11:45.

We will spend some time reminding ourselves of our national priorities; look at and discuss our state priorities, and re-visit, confirm, and/or recommend changes to our local priorities. We need you! While there will be handouts of pertinent information at the meeting, **we do hope you will do a little homework.** Before the meeting, please take some time to review and digest the current state priorities. You can find them at http://lwvsc.org/files/AGENDA_FOR_ACTION_2017-2019.pdf. It is likely to contain the framework for any new goals.

Please RSVP to Susan James: sc.susanbjames@gmail.com or call 256-6822. Please let Susan know you are attending, even if you plan to bring your own lunch.

Thanks so much for your participation. Our Annual Program Planning Meeting is an integral part of developing and forwarding the League's mission on a national, state, and local level. We look forward to seeing you. Rita Paul, 2nd Vice President

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OBSERVER CORPS October Submission by L. J. Cole

10/16 Richland County Council

Observer: Dale Baer

There were several vacancies on county boards in which LWV members may have interest. Many require expertise in an area; for example, the Hospitality Tax Board requires its members to have had experience in the restaurant industry. Mr. Bill Malinowski is the contact person for these positions.

The following boards have one vacancy: Board of Assessment Appeals, Board of Zoning Appeals, Planning Commission, Airport Commission, and Midlands Workforce Development Board.

The following boards have 2 vacancies: Accommodations Tax, Hospitality Tax, and Procurement Review Panel.

The Lexington Richland Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council has 3 vacancies.
Richland Memorial Hospital Board has 4 vacancies.

The Employee Grievance Committee has 6 vacancies.

The Building Codes Board of Appeals has 8 vacancies.

This was a regularly scheduled meeting of Richland County Council.

Editor's note: This report was lost in computer failures, but Janelle included some of the most important information in her earlier monthly report. Thanks for your work, Dale & Lady June. Suzanne

Observer Corps January2019 Submission by Lady June Cole

1/8 - Richland County Council

Observer: L. J. Cole, Special Session

The session was called to order and the outgoing Chair, Joyce Dickerson (District 2) welcomed the new members and thanked the other members, specifically Bill Malinowski (District 1), Vice Chair, for their service. The purpose of the meeting was to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair for a one-year term. Joyce Dickerson nominated Calvin Jackson (District 9), and Gwendolyn Kennedy (District 7) nominated Paul Livingston (District 4) for Chair. Paul Livingston was elected Chair with 10 out of 11 votes. For Vice Chair, Joyce Dickerson nominated Dalhi Meyers (District 10), and Bill Malinowski nominated Gwendolyn Kennedy, who declined the nomination. Dalhi Meyers was elected Vice Chair with 9 out of 11 votes. As the new Chair, Paul Livingston stated that he understood the commitment and responsibility of the position, and that he would be meeting with each member. He also said that he would not let them down. The Council proceeded with selecting a revised seating arrangement based on seniority and adjourned.

1/22/19 Senate

Observer: L. J. Cole

Meeting was called to order with 18 members present. The body agreed to wait an additional three minutes to establish a quorum.

Various bills were overviewed and then assigned to the appropriate Committees. A few of the bills discussed within the body included proposals for:

S.227 Millage rate limitations,

S.76 Extends \$750 tax credit to homeowners using Energy Star,

S.207 4% tax exemption for property of people expecting to return home after a nursing home stay. Moved to second reading,

S.236 PTSD insurance and programs were given \$500,000. SLED needs permission to write the checks to distribute the funds to the appropriate agencies. Moved to second reading.

The body voted to meet at 2:00 Wednesday (1/30) to allow time for committees to meet beforehand.

1/22/19 Senate Judiciary Subcommittee

Observer: L. J. Cole

S.182 and S.202. At the start of the observation, Prof. Buell testified on the need to secure voting technology that provides a paper trail. Senator Bright Matthews raised questions concerning getting the correct names on the ballots for various school districts and whether paper ballots were easier to verify. The response was that procurement would have to address getting the best possible ballot, and that paper ballots allowed for verification. If ballots are mismarked, the scanner rejects and returns the ballot to the voter for review immediately. Prof. Buell stressed that a ballot-marking system that follows with a scanner is more time efficient and secure. Senators McElveen, Gambrell, Massey, and Campsen inquired about what surrounding states use, cost, what happens to the paper ballots, and how long should they be kept. Prof. Buell noted what Georgia and North Carolina use, but that they were not consistent across the states. The cost ranges from \$4,000 to \$5,000 per machine. He responded that ballots have been kept 22 months and then shredded in other states. He recommended piloting machines for the next primaries. Senator Bright-Matthews questioned how expeditiously it could be done.

Marci Andino, the Executive Director of the SC State Election Commission, then testified. She stated that the quest to replace the current machines started 8 years ago. Any new machines will provide a paper trail, and the office ensures that they will provide a “dependable and resilient system which can be verified.” A request for proposals started in December 2018; they have received six responses, including one from the current vendor. The vendors selected for consideration must be certified, must provide machines that are secure, and must allow voters with disabilities to cast a vote independently. No commitment has been made to any vendor, and she is requesting \$60 million in the budget for a complete system.

Three more members have stepped up to participate in the League’s Observer Corps! Thank you! Link for submitting observations: <https://tinyurl.com/LWVColaCorps>. LJC



GROWING IMPACT OF VOTE411: “Making Democracy Work” is a slogan of the League of Women Voters (LWVUS). LWV/Columbia Area chapter has achieved several milestones for improving democracy by informing and engaging citizens in the fall 2018 elections. With the leadership of Chair Keller Barron, Technical Coordinator Melissa Augsburger, and the hard work of their committee, voters were enabled access to updated VOTE411

VOTE411 is an effort of the LWVUS. Visitors to the site use an interactive map of the United States to focus on individual states, and the details of all the elections (primary and

general) held in that state. Candidates who filed for election in all races are listed and offered an opportunity to participate.

The LWV is a nonpartisan, grassroots volunteer organization. States have delegated to local Leagues the duty of updating all the local election information for their jurisdictions. A press conference and roll out at the downtown Richland Public Library on May 22, 2018, introduced VOTE411 to media, local nonprofit organizations, political consultants, and candidates.

Throughout the primary and general election, LWV/Columbia Area volunteers distributed more than 2,000 printed materials promoting VOTE411. Public libraries, schools, community centers, public transportation, and more, were provided with VOTE411 information.

Initial 2018 statewide results show 94,030 individuals visited the VOTE411 website 127,597 times. The Columbia Area chapter (covering Richland and Lexington counties) provided information on 46 races with 102 candidates. In the Midlands, 17,531 individuals visited the Vote411 website 23,230 times. An ad placed on the SC Information Highway (SCIway) helped channel about one-third of these visits to VOTE411.

The committee worked diligently to collect answers from all political candidates on a range of questions. The Columbia Area surveys had no more than three questions for candidates to answer. Their answers were limited to 500 words. Unresponsive candidates were repeatedly reminded to fill out the form. Candidates' written responses were posted verbatim to the VOTE411 website. Unfortunately, about 50 % of the candidates did not send in their thoughts and positions for voters to consider before voting in 2018.

The League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area will continue to update VOTE411 information and distribute election information pamphlets widely. League volunteers hope that the response rate from political candidates improves with each election cycle, until reaching 100% one fine day. *_Laura Woliver, 1st Vice President*



PLANNING AHEAD FOR VOTER ACCESS: Sharon Ayling wrote to Richland/Lexington District 5, which has invited the League to participate in their schools: "It is not too soon to prepare by registering our youngest voters to be informed, lifelong voters. The main mission of the League of Women Voters is voter registration. We are scrupulously nonpartisan in these efforts. I hope that you will allow us to help with voter registration in your high school during the second semester. We would appreciate the opportunity to set a date for voter registration."



POLL WORKERS NEEDED FOR 2019 LOCAL ELECTIONS

Richland County Voter Registration & Elections is seeking poll workers to assist with upcoming local elections and has invited the League to assist. While there are no federal or state elections in 2019, municipal elections will be held in Arcadia Lakes, Blythewood, Columbia, and Irmo. For more information on becoming a poll worker, contact the Voter Registration & Elections office at 576-2241 or election.worker@richlandcountysc.gov. Provide your name, telephone number and email address. Elections offices are operated by the state; however, county governments are required to provide funding for the offices.



LEAGUE IN THE NEWS:

Columbia Star reporter Anita Baker attended LWVSC LEAD and wrote a long comprehensive article about the meeting, including photos:

http://www.thecolumbiastar.com/news/2019-01-25/Society/League_of_Women_Voters_hosts_annual_conference.html. “Looking toward the future, Kennedy shared the League of Women Voters is working on promoting the equal opportunity to vote by addressing barriers to voting held by the elderly, people with disabilities, or persons without transportation or access to voting sites.”

Joanne Williams wrote an op ed published in *The State* newspaper about the proposal to make bombs (and even more waste) at the Savannah River Site:

<https://www.thestate.com/opinion/letters-to-the-editor/article225142645.html>
“Allowing plutonium pits to be produced at the Savannah River Site magnifies the nuclear weapons role for South Carolinians. The waste that was produced 50 years ago from our involvement with nuclear weapons is still an environmental nightmare. We need to transition to clean technology, and stay out of the weapons business.”

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ENVIRONMENTAL UPDATE: Environmental issues continue to receive a lot of attention in SC. It can be challenging to keep up with and be involved with everything.

The Conservation Voters of SC /Conservation Coalition continues to work hard to actively lobby for their priority SC legislation. Chester Sansbury represents the League on this committee. Their priorities for 2019 include:

1. **Inject Competition into the Energy Marketplace**
2. **Uphold Citizens' Rights to Clean Air and Water**
3. **Prevent Offshore Drilling and Seismic Testing**
4. **Protect Home Rule (Defend Local Plastics Solutions)**
5. **Unhook the Overflows** In several communities repeated overflow has resulted in the discharge of untreated sewage into neighborhoods and local waterways, creating both environmental and public health risks.

This last issue was discussed in detail at the January meeting of the Central Midlands COG.

ONE OF THE NEWEST CONSERVATION GROUPS IS THE "SENIOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERS ALLIANCE." Members include retirees from the Department of Natural Resources, SCDHEC, University of SC, scientists, conservationists, and nonprofit organizations. Meetings since its creation have been hosted at the SC Wildlife Federation office on Pickens Street. Dr. Barry Beasley, a senior retiree from DNR has coordinated meetings of the group, and discussions and ranking of important issues. Participants from the LWV include Trish Jerman and Chester Sansbury. *The Senior Environmental Leadership Alliance is committed to bringing scientific, fact-based information to help in solving South Carolina's most pressing environmental and conservation issues.* Voting by the members resulted in ranking of these issues as the top three:

(1) The S.C. Water Plan, (2) Offshore Drilling and Seismic Testing, and (3) Climate Change.

The Alliance decided that they would get involved in these issues by participating in the S.C. Water Plan process, the Governor's new S.C. Floodwater Commission, by attending meetings, drafting appropriate white papers and op eds, providing input and testimony at public meetings, and conducting scientific review of plans.

The group will serve as a collective voice of some of the most informed and experienced retired officials and activists in South Carolina. They hope to make a difference.

Chester Sansbury

LAUNCH OF SC AND A SECOND WAVE FEMINISM ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The official launch of an oral history project focused on South Carolina women’s stories (a collaboration of the USC Libraries Department of Oral History with the USC Women’s and Gender Studies Program and the WGST Partnership Council) will meet March 5, Hollings Program Room, Hollings Library. More information will follow. Laura Wolliver

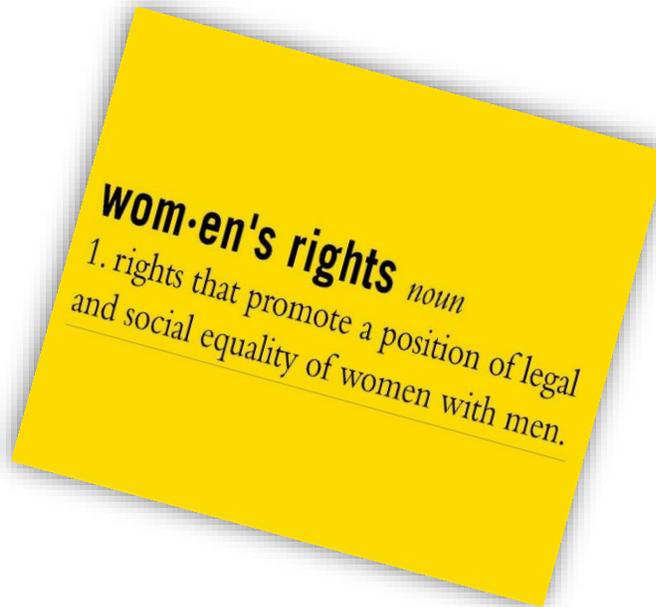




PHOTO GALLERY

JANUARY 19 FORUM PHOTOS



Duncan Buell, Gary Cleary, John Ruoff



Members of the Forum attendees prior to forum – standing room!



Gary Cleary and Beth Bernstein

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Observer Corps and high school voter registration meeting for Lexington County Attendees





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 begin typing "**League of Women Voters of the Columbia Area**" in the search box until a list pops up.
2. Click on the name **League of Women Voters of Columbia, SC** with the familiar blue LWV Logo on the left.

That's it!

Twitter:

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

Facebook and Twitter email address:

@LWVColumbiaSC

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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) 576-2060 or check:

www.richlandonline.com

