



LEAGUE LINES

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www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Editor Suzanne Rhodes / Co-editor Sej Harman

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March 2013

CALENDAR & NEWS

MARCH

1-2 (F-Sat) Racial Justice Conference
(see p. 5)



2 (Sat) Moms Demand Action re Gun Control - Rally at State House - 10:30 AM
(see p. 6)



4 (M) Board Meeting, 5:30, Nurses Assoc. Bld.



14 (Th) Dr. Arjun Makhijani re the Future of the Savannah River Site
(see p. 6)

21 (Th) - 11:45 AM - Policy Luncheon 

21 (Th) - Deadline for April League Lines articles (suzrhodes@juno.com)



23 (Sat) - Suffragette March with

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
Celebrating the 100-year anniversary of integrated advocacy for women in SC
(see p. 5)

APRIL

27-28 (S-Su) - 2013 LWVSC Convention
Duncan, SC



more details elsewhere in *League Lines*

Learn More League!

National www.lwv.org/
State <http://lwvsc.org/>
Columbia www.lwvcolumbiasc.org

Public Policy Luncheon

Thursday, March 21, 2013 - 11:45 AM
Capital Senior Center - 1650 Park Circle

ETHICS REFORM

Our advocates **JoAnne Day** and **Lynn Teague** will discuss current Statehouse action, with Lynn focusing on proposed ethics reform. Their talk will be a good time for League members to refresh their understanding of issues currently before the General Assembly. It also will give members an opportunity to hear about upcoming advocacy events.

Please join us at the Capital Senior Center at 11:45 if you wish to have lunch or at 12 p.m. for the policy program. If you have friends interested in ethics reform, invite them to join us.

We had a delicious caterer for the February lunch called "Food for Thought." What an appropriate caterer for a League policy discussion! We hope to have them back again.



Reservations Preferred

Susan B James at sc.rr.com or 256-6822
Cost is \$10 for the catered lunch or you may bring your own.

The Prez Says...**Rita Paul**

It might have been cold and rainy, but the League moved on – February was a very BUSY month!

Our consensus meeting on the state education study, “How to Evaluate and Retain Effective Teachers,” was very well attended and productive. Also please look for more specific information about our League’s program planning for next year. We had an interesting and lively discussion that will be outlined and sent out in more detail. Keep in mind that this year we are looking at state positions to be discussed at the upcoming state league convention. Local positions will be ready for your input at our annual meeting in May.



Special thanks to **Martha Roblee** who has been instrumental in exploring different caterers for our Public Policy luncheons. Please give Martha your feedback when you see her, or email her at mroblee@sc.rr.com.

We have had some dynamic Public Policy luncheons. Thanks to **Sally Huguley** and **Martha** for reaching out to speakers and working to put these successful luncheons together. We need your feedback!

There are many and varied events in late February and into March. All very important for League participation. Please review the calendar and make every effort to attend as many as you can.

Don’t forget the state convention coming up in **April 27th and 28th** in Duncan, SC. Please visit the state league website for specifics and more information.

Our Annual Meeting is coming up in May. The board will be looking at dates and will communicate to you as soon as possible. The annual meeting is very important to our program planning going forward as well as election of new officers and generally setting the direction for your League!

Look forward to seeing you all at upcoming events! As always thanks for all you do for your League! Spring is just around the corner!

Rita

The nation's most powerful politicians honored **Rosa Parks** on Wednesday, February 27, by unveiling her statue in a permanent place in the U.S. Capitol. President Barack Obama praised Parks as an enduring reminder of what true leadership requires, "no matter how humble or lofty our positions."



Parks became the first black woman to be depicted in a full-length statue in the Capitol's Statuary Hall. A bust of another black woman, abolitionist Sojourner Truth, sits in the Capitol Visitors Center.

"We do well by placing a statue of her here," Obama said. **"But we can do no greater honor to her memory than to carry forward the power of her principle and a courage born of conviction."**

The unveiling brought Obama, House Speaker John Boehner and other congressional leaders together in the midst of a fierce standoff over the automatic spending cuts set to take effect on March 1, if no compromise is worked out.

NOW IS THE TIME
TAKE ACTION FOR HEALTHCARE

TAKE ACTION: Tell your SC legislator why accepting federal dollars to pay for health care is the right choice for South Carolina.

The South Carolina House of Representatives will begin deliberating the state budget in the beginning of March. Now is the time to urge your Representative to include measures to accept the federal dollars that would allow South Carolina to fill our health care coverage gap.

We just saw Governor Scott in Florida agree to accept the federal funds when people spoke up for what they believe was best for their state - we can do that here, too!

Accepting the federal money available under the new health care law to cover more people through Medicaid in South Carolina **will improve health access for over 329,000 of our citizens**, including:

- **30,000 US Veterans and 23,000 of their dependents**
- **65,000 older South Carolinians not yet eligible for Medicare**
- **hundreds of thousands of the working poor**

Let's not turn our backs on these hard working people!

Changes to Medicaid would give hard-working families the security of knowing they can get the care they need. It would also give South Carolinians access to critical preventative care, so fewer people will be forced to seek expensive emergency room care. Affordable health care means we can keep ourselves and our families healthy, keep our jobs, sustain the self-employed and start new businesses. Affordable health care ensures that our kids can thrive and be successful. If you think South Carolina legislators should accept the new federal dollars to pay for health care, **let your Representative hear from you, your family, your neighbors, the people you worship with and the people you work with!**

Take Action! [Call or write your representative](#) and [Governor Haley](#) and urge them to accept the federal dollars to cover our citizens who make less than \$15,000 a year and are uninsured. Refusing to accept the \$11.2 billion in federal funding to expand Medicaid coverage is unfair to our citizens. It's a good deal for our state. It will grow the economy. And it's the right thing to do. Please let us know when you take action!

Sue Berkowitz, *Director*, SC Appleseed Legal Justice Center

To renew or initiate League membership: Go to www.lwvcolumbiasc.org, click on "JOIN US" in left menu, and choose your level of membership.

As a sidebar, starting salary for a brand new correctional officer at the SC Department of Corrections is \$25,000 per year and participation in the standard full family health care plan would cost \$3840 per year. That would be 15% of their salary before taxes.

February PP Luncheon ...Recap

Just what the doctor ordered. We had two excellent speakers who presented information and perspectives on the current healthcare issues. **Cindy Ottone**, Director of Policy Measures, National Committee for Quality Assurance,

reminded me of Sgt. Friday from Dragnet. She gave us “just the facts” on how the Affordable Care Act would affect us.

For the first three years, until 2016, Obamacare will not cost the states anything to expand Medicaid. This extended coverage will allow many of those who are not covered by work health plans or who just do not have enough funds to pay for work health plans to be covered.

After 2016, the cost would be 10% for the states. According to Ms. Ottone, several states headed by Republican governors who stated, after the passage of the Act, that they would not participate, have since started to sing a different tune. Arizona, Ohio, New Mexico, Michigan, Nevada, North Dakota and Alaska will now expand their Medicaid.

The federal government, in the past, has provided some funding for uninsured patients at hospitals. As a result of the Supreme Court decision, this coverage will be unfunded if Medicaid Expansion is not accepted by the state. Those looking for health care will be able to access what is described as “health care exchanges.” These exchanges come in three types: 1) state run, 2) the Federal government in partnership with the states, or 3) a plan where the feds run the program. *The last is how South Carolina intends to participate, as of this writing.*

Some popular changes with Obamacare: allowing parents to extend their healthcare coverage to their children until the age of 26; and elimination of the donut hole by 2020. Obamacare will also cover pre-existing conditions and provide small businesses with

tax credits up to 35%; by 2014 tax credits for small business will increase to 50%. Caps on premiums based on age will be capped to no more than three times the rates for younger people; presently, women and older people pay more.

We have already seen an impact in the increase of funds to be made available for primary care and in elimination of lifetime caps in terms of coverage. Without the caps, a parent doesn’t have to worry about their child’s care and how they’re going to pay for it. This is especially important to parents of children requiring neo-natal care.

Cindy recommended the following websites: www.healthreform.gov; and Kaiser Family Foundation <http://healthreform.kff.org/>. She also referred to AARP’s website at <http://www.aarp.org/health/medicare-insurance/>.



Ellis M. Knight, MD, MBA, Senior Vice President Physician and Clinical Integration – Palmetto Health, Doctor Knight, has been recognized as one of the country’s first hospitalists—a physician who works only within a hospital. He noted that the comments he would make would be *his alone*; he made that statement because one of the first things he said was “**Americans think we have the greatest healthcare system. That’s not true, and it costs too much.**” We also have unacceptable levels of quality care; for example, every year

98,000 people die in hospitals due to errors that were avoidable or preventable. He topped that with the fact that Columbia’s zip code 29203 (North Main) **leads the nation** in diabetic amputees. There South Carolina goes again, being at the top of the wrong list.

Dr. Knight’s ultimate hope is that the new healthcare system would include value-based reimbursements to provide better care for us all. It will ask the question, how many things did you do and how did it work out? If a patient returns to the hospital within 30 days of being released, the hospital will be “dinged.” ACA will review hospital procedures to identify best performances and practices.

After listening to Dr. Knight I didn’t feel as sick as when he started. I guess one of his best practices is to give the good news last.

Pam Craig

WHERE WILL OUR DRINKING WATER COME FROM?

Approximately 150 interested parties from public utilities, consulting firms, State agencies, environmental organizations (including the LWV), and interested citizens attended a 2 ½ hour meeting at DHEC on February 04th to hear explanations from DNR and DHEC staff and their answers to questions about plans and needs for development of an update to the State's Water Use Plan. An update would answer questions about how much useable surface water is available and how much will be needed to accommodate growth. The proposed effort would develop computer models for eight SC watersheds which could be used to help manage the resource. However, last year, 2 million dollars for the project were cut from the State budget and it's unsure whether funds will be provided by the General Assembly this year.

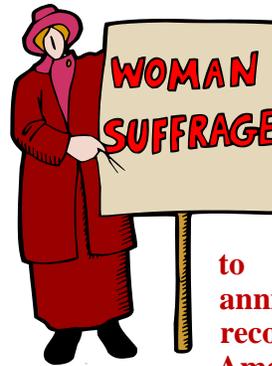


According to DHEC "South Carolina currently has limited scientific information about the availability of our water supplies and future demands on those water supplies. Georgia has already completed such an evaluation and North Carolina is in the process of conducting a similar assessment. To complement South Carolina's new surface water permitting program (and its existing groundwater permitting program) administered by SCDHEC, and to gather the information necessary to update the State Water Plan developed by SCDNR, surface water availability assessments are needed."

According to SCDNR Director Alvin Taylor, "It's past time to do a scientific study of what's available in South Carolina and then have models in place. If we want to bring an industry in somewhere, they can run the model and see how much water's available and how that's going to affect water down stream."

If you support funding for this effort, you should contact your SC Senate member ASAP.

Chester Sansbury



SUFFRAGETTE CELEBRATION

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority has invited the LWV of the Columbia Area to join the sorority on **March 23, 2013, to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the official recognition allowing African American women to participate in the Suffragette Movement.** The Board agreed to participate in the *re-enactment of the march from Finlay Park to the Statehouse*, followed by lunch at Seawell's Restaurant.

The Winter 2013 SC Voter has all the details.

Announcements & Items of Interest

REGIONAL RACIAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE

March 1-2, 2013 to be held at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Columbia, (2701 Heyward St.)

Chaos or Community: Organizing for Real and Lasting Change, the conference will focus on the institutional and systemic manifestations of racism that are typically ignored or dismissed in discussions on personal prejudice. **Friday** night play about two newly freed slaves and a wounded Confederate soldier who come together for a Seder meal at the end of the Civil War. **Saturday** features keynote speaker Linda Stout, founder of Spirit in Action, a progressive organization that seeks to build diverse communities across boundaries of class, race, age, sexual orientation, and other identities. **Several workshops will also be presented.** Registration fee of \$75 includes Friday dinner and Saturday breakfast and lunch. Register at <http://www.uucolumbia.org>.

For more information, please contact the Rev. Neal Jones at (803) 260-6483 or at nealjones@sc.rr.com.

SPECIAL TOUR OF IMPRESSIONISM EXHIBIT AT COLUMBIA MUSEUM OF ART

...with a docent available. If you are interested, let **Pam Craig know ASAP** (896-2806 or 749-6176) and **Susan James** will try to get us on the CMA calendar. Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 11–5, Saturday 10–5 and Sunday 12–5. The exhibit runs through April 12. Let Pam know your preference/s – we may choose to eat lunch or supper nearby. \$12

Future of the Savannah River Site

Various friends and contractors of the SRS have reportedly “invited” the Department of Energy to send commercial spent fuel to SRS, now that Yucca Mountain appears to be quite dead as a geologic repository. SRS boosters wish to retain their talented employees, and feel that reprocessing of commercial spent fuel is an economic opportunity. Independent federal studies have repeatedly indicated otherwise. The nuclear industry presents at virtually every meeting of the Governor’s Nuclear Advisory Council. Opponents of reprocessing have invited **Arjun Makhijani** to share his concerns about reprocessing on the afternoon of **March 14th**. Dr. Makhijani is a President of Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, holds a Ph.D. in engineering (specialization: nuclear fusion) from the University of California at Berkeley. He is also a radiation health specialist. He may be available at lunch in advance of the NAC meeting. Contact Suzanne Rhodes if you are interested in more information. Suzrhodes@juno.com.

“Stop the Violence

One Mom at a Time”



Rally on the north side of the State House in Columbia, (at the stairs, facing Gervais Street). We'll be gathering to share information, show our strength, and let our legislators at all levels know Moms Demand Action. **Saturday, March 2, 2013, 10:30 a.m. until 12:30 p.m.** to show your support for reasonable gun control in South Carolina and nationwide.

Education...Still Lots to Learn

Barbara Zia, of the LWVSC, suggested the following, which references LWVSC's *amicus brief* in *Shelby County v. Holder*. Further reading at: <http://www.wltx.com/news/article/223188/2/State-Officials-Divided-on-Challenge-to-Voting-Rights-Act>

The *Post & Courier* had an excellent 4-part Sunday series on the educational, economic and health challenges in 'forgotten' parts of our state. **February 10** focused on income, poverty, employment and growth disparities by county. It described both the challenges and strategies for overcoming them in 26 chronically poor counties. Unfortunately, the online archive doesn't include the powerful photos that accompanied the special section of the paper.

<http://search.postandcourier.com/sp?keywords=forgotten+south+carolina&noblankcheck=0&aff=1100&BuildNavigators=1>

Renowned historian Walter Edgar lays out how South Carolina's past perpetuates disparities in education, economic opportunity and health care [which] linger today. The article delves into many of the issues of concern to League members, such as excessive legislative control over functions like the state judiciary and local government, and the need for tax and ethics reform and access to health care and quality public education for all. It's necessary to understand our past in order to shape a better future.

<http://www.postandcourier.com/article/20130224/PC16/130229600/1165/forgotten-south-carolina-ties-to-past-hamper-present>

Global Warming Effects in South Carolina

A team of state scientists has outlined serious concerns about the damage South Carolina will suffer from climate change – threats that include invading eels, dying salt marshes, flooded homes and increased diseases in the state's wildlife. The report is a year old, and is very important, but it took an FOIA request to read it.

by Sammy Fretwell (sfretwell@thestate.com)

Read more here: <http://www.thestate.com/2013/02/24/2645515/secret-climate-report-calls-for.html#storylink=cpy>



League Media Stars!

You, too, can be a media star!

President Rita Paul will speak on **March 11** to a group of SC Girl Scouts who are honorary pages at the State House this year. Rita's subject will be the History of LWV and its impact. .

Lexington County Council

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

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

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.



2012-2013 Board: President - Rita Paul; 1st VP - JoAnne Day (Legislative Action); 2nd VP – Sally Huguley; Secretary/Treasurer – Martha Roblee; Directors – Sej Harman (Communications/Membership); Sarah Leverette (State Liaison); Lynn Teague (Advocacy); Janie White. **Nominating Committee (2013-2014):** Janie White, chair. **Off-Board:** Voter Services – Shirley Geiger; Website – JoAnne Day; Environmental Affairs - Chester Sansbury; Membership – Pam Craig; *League Lines* - Suzanne Rhodes / Sej Harman (Co-Editors).