



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS<sup>®</sup> OF GREENVILLE COUNTY

**First Quarter Newsletter  
2019**

**Editor – Jean Wood**

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2/7/19 Board Meeting  
1PM – 2:30PM  
Room 209C  
Westminster Church

2/9/19 Community  
Budget Teach-in  
10:30AM – 1:00PM  
Triune Mercy Center

2/14 LWV is 99 yrs old!



2/21/19 Pgm Planning  
Mtg. 6PM @ 5 Wren Dr.  
Greenville, 29609

3/7/19 Board Meeting  
1PM – 2:30PM  
Room 209C  
Westminster Church

4/4/19 Board Meeting  
1PM – 2:30PM  
Room 209C  
Westminster Church

## Notes from the President – Lawson Wetli

January 2019 – it’s a new calendar year and also the beginning of a new South Carolina legislative session.

And the League is off and running, too. What role will you play in that?

In the Greenville League, we want every member to find the space they want to fill. For instance, we will do our best to get information to members about League-supported legislative bills so that you can feel confident about contacting your legislators to urge their support as well.

I also ask you to consider what you can do to help the League. One thing we learned at the recent South Carolina League LEAD event was that compared to other similar organizations (like the ACLU or Common Cause), the League of Women Voters has especially deep roots and a broad reach in terms of chapters and membership, and also that we are the least funded of these groups.

One thing this tells us is something obvious to me – that our strength is in our members. We, the members of the League, are the hands and the eyes and the heart of the League, doing the work that furthers the mission. I hope that you will consider what your gifts and skills are and whether you have the time and effort to apply them to the League. And we’re here to help you do that.

I also want you to consider if there are other ways you can give to the League, including financial support. We never want finances to be a barrier to League participation. Also, for those with resources to share, the League is a worthy recipient. It is dues and donations that fund the work of the League, like litigation to protect voting rights and grants to fund voter registration.

If you decide you have more to give, here’s [a place to give it](#). It’s a contribution I am confident you will feel good about.

And to each and every member, thank you for making the League what it is. Which is awesome.

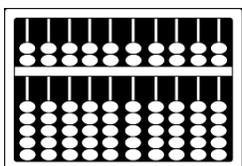
## New Members



We have more new members that have joined our League. Please welcome Hans Von Walter, Frances Bishop, Kelly Byers, Mary Alexander-Wideman, Admeredith Wideman, Donna Dekay, Rita McKenny, James Daughtry, Nancy Fitzer, Carol Doot, Lindsey Jacobs, Tracy LeGrand, and Tom LeGrand.

**Welcome to the  
League of Women Voters  
of Greenville County**

# LWVGC



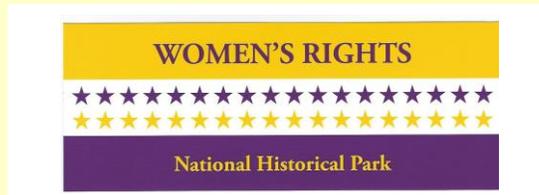
## Not For Women Only

### By Don Earl

In August last year, I had an opportunity to be in Seneca Falls, NY for a family reunion. As I was making plans for this visit, something in my memory triggered a question of why did Seneca Falls ring a bell? My guess now is this must have been the result of a Social Studies lesson somewhere along my educational schooling, when I realized that Seneca Falls is home to the Women's Rights National Historical Park. With this in mind, as I was just going to be there one night, I had hoped to experience as much of this history as possible, with revolving around family plans. Timing was fortunate for me and I had a wonderful hour of experience at the visitor center and the next door rehabilitated Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, where the First Women's Rights Convention in the United States was held. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to share these notes and perspective in regard to this treasured visit.



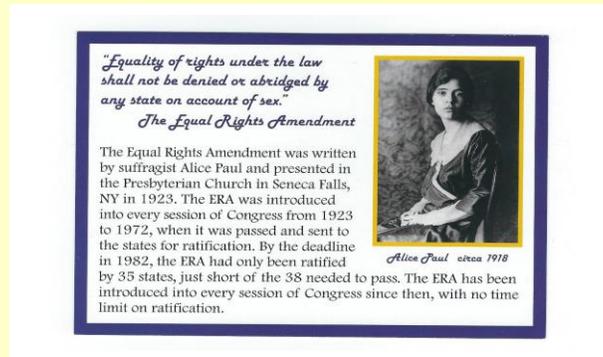
The Wesleyan Methodist Chapel was built in 1843 and is preserved as part of the Women's Rights National Historical Park. It is here that this first convention, attended by 300 people, was held on July 19 and 20, 1848. They discussed the Declaration of Sentiments and resolutions calling for equality for men and women under the law. I spent some special moments inside the Chapel absorbing the atmosphere of what must have transpired at that time.



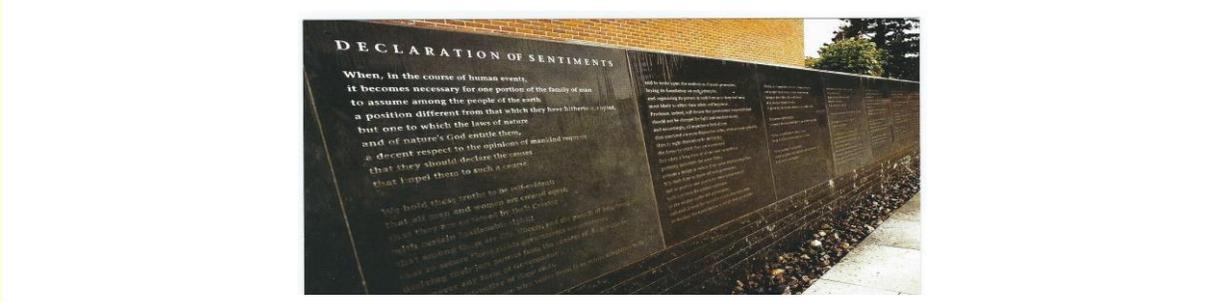
The suffrage banner was created by the National Woman's Party during the campaign for the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment was passed in 1920 and gave American women the right to vote. The 36 stars represent the number of states which ratified the amendment. The banner colors are purple for justice, white for purity of intent, and gold for courage.

A paragraph from an article found on internet: Historical Overview of the National Woman's Party

"On May 21, 1919, the U.S. House of Representatives again passed the Susan B. Anthony federal suffrage amendment, and on June 4, the U.S. Senate followed suit. The enactment of the amendment initiated a 14-month campaign for ratification by 36 states. During this time the NWP sent national organizers into key states to help local NWP members coordinate ratification efforts. Finally, on August 18, 1920, Tennessee became the 36th state to ratify the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment. Antisuffragists tried to overturn the vote, but after six more days of legal maneuvering, the Tennessee governor signed the certificate of ratification and mailed it to Washington on August 24. Two days later, on August 26, Secretary of State Bainbridge Colby signed the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment into law."

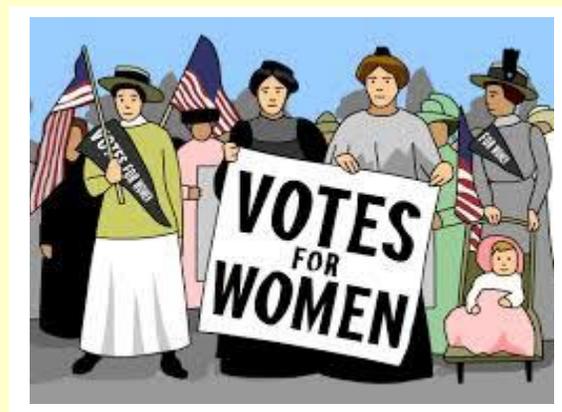


There is an opportunity for additional understanding of how this ratification procedure is completed. My first question was when I realized there are 36 states represented on the suffrage banner, yet this post card from last year purchased at the visitor center mentions that by the deadline in 1982, the ERA had only been ratified by 35 states. I coincidentally heard a short news segment today (Thursday 1/24/19) that this subject is back in the news and there are now 37 states that have ratified the ERA?



It was mentioned earlier that at this first convention in 1848, the discussion and documentation of a “Declaration of Sentiments”. The wording for this Declaration is inscribed on a wall, including a gentle water cascade along the full length, located in a tranquil space between the visitor center and the Chapel (Declaration Park). This document defiantly declared that “all men and women are created equal”. The final copy was signed by 100 of the 300 attendees – and I conclude with the fact that this was 68 women and 32 men.

This last fact helps illustrate why I am proud to wear my “Not For Women Only” pin, and rewarding to see that at this beginning, there were also men supporting our cause and purpose.



## Greenlink Bus System is an Asset for Everyone By Dorothy Dowe

Most people who work in the City of Greenville live outside of it in Greenville County, and commute to work either in their own vehicle or by public transportation, including Uber, Lyft and our Greenlink bus system. For those who drive themselves, long term parking downtown will continue to be scarce and expensive, even with planned expansion of the city's garage space. County residents deserve an affordable way to get to and from work if they do not have their own means of transportation, or cannot secure an affordable long term parking space, and Greenlink is the only reasonable means to meet this growing need.

Even if you do not work within the city limits, you may choose to enjoy our downtown as a patron. Our hospitality industry is remarkable, offering some of the finest restaurants and community spaces in the Southeast. We offer multiple hotels for our visitors to stay, and more are under construction. Restaurants and hotels depend on workers to provide services to their patrons, but many of these workers may not have their own transportation or cannot afford to spend \$864 of their yearly earnings on garage parking fees, which is roughly 5% of the annual gross compensation for a minimum wage worker (source: Greenville Chamber of Commerce Workforce Data Collaborative).

As one of the major cities in South Carolina, Greenville's transportation challenges are not unique, but our funding of Greenlink is woefully inadequate when compared to our metropolitan neighbors. According to a study by the Piedmont Health Foundation, Columbia spends \$38.16 per capita on transit and Charleston spends \$17.79 per capita on transit. At its current funding level, Greenville spends just \$3.76 per capita and as a result, we have come to the place where our bus fleet is aging, our maintenance facility is inadequate, and we are simply unable to get workers to and from where they need to be in a reliable, continuous manner.

Now, we have reached an important crossroad in providing improved transit and mobility options for our workforce. In its current state, the Greenlink route frequency, on-time dependability, maintenance facility and aging bus fleet are unacceptable and do not meet the needs of Greenville County residents. Although the recent federal grant of \$11 million to be used to construct a new maintenance facility is a big win for Greenlink, there are two significant financial challenges to overcome in order to retain the grant. First, it requires \$2.75 million in matching funds at the local level or we lose the grant. Second, Greenlink needs continued operational (not capital) funding simply to keep operating at its current pace.

Greenville City Council recently stepped up by approving \$2.4 million additional new funds for Greenlink, allocated as \$1.4 million towards the local match for the grant and \$1 million for transit capital. Greenville County Council now has the opportunity to show similar leadership by providing the additional financial commitment necessary to help Greenlink become a full service public transportation system.

As shareholders in Greenville, we are all served by Greenlink. If properly supported, Greenlink can promote job security for many citizens in Greenville County. It can help attract new businesses into the entire community and knit together the fabric of Greenville County through improved transportation for its residents. Fortunately, jobs are available throughout Greenville County and we will continue to recruit new businesses to our area based on our ability to supply the workforce for them. Healthy growth in our community requires that Greenlink be supported as an integral part of the infrastructure.

So, whether you use Greenlink to get to work in the City or throughout Greenville County, or, if you "play" in the city and rely on the help of the service industry which often depends on Greenlink to get to work, public transportation is a valuable asset for everyone and is well worth supporting. Full support and funding from Greenville County as well as the City is an investment that is necessary to support job growth and prosperity in Greenville County. I urge the Greenville County Council representatives to support Greenlink at the level that it requires and that our citizens deserve.

Linda Hardman & Jan Welch at Membership Drop-in



Membership Drop-in

## South Carolina's Teacher Shortage: It's Real and It's Here! An Education Forum By Frances Wortkoetter

On January 24, 2019, the Education Committee hosted the League's general meeting at J.L. Mann High School focusing on South Carolina's increasing teacher shortage. Spearheaded by fellow committee member, Wanda Meade, we had an excellent lineup of speakers and an audience of over 200, including teachers, SC legislators, and community members. Our speakers included Dr. Jennifer Garrett, representative from The Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention and Advancement (CERRA), Suzanne Billings who heads the Greenville County Schools' Teachers Forum, and Dr. Burke Royster, Superintendent of Greenville County Schools.

Dr. Jennifer Garrett shared CERRA's results of the SC Annual Educator Supply and Demand Survey which highlighted these statewide results:

(For the complete report view <https://www.cerra.org/supply-and-demand.html>).

- Approximately 7,300 teachers left their positions in 2017-18 school year, an increase of nearly 10% compared to the 2016-17 school year.
- 35% of all teachers who left had five or fewer years of experience in a SC public school classroom
- 25% of first-year teachers hired for the 2017-18 school year left their positions by the end of that school year and are no longer teaching in any SC public school.
- Since 2014-15, there has been approximately a 20% decrease in students graduating from a SC teacher education program.

Suzanne Billings, Greenville County's Teacher of the Year and Chair of the Greenville County Schools Teachers' Forum, outlined the concerns teachers across the state and district face with respect to low salaries, burdensome paperwork and teacher duties, excessive focus on standardized testing, and a cultural climate devaluing the role of teachers in American society. She stressed that more teacher mentoring is needed, along with a salary that should be comparable to the increase in the rise of the cost of living in Greenville.

Greenville County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Burke Royster, addressed the Greenville County Schools response to the teacher shortage by emphasizing that the District's starting and average salaries for teachers remain higher than the state average and are competitive with other Southeastern states. Early hiring strategies have been implemented and recruiting takes place in and out of our district and state. Greenville County Schools implements state education programs like SC Create and PACE, which allow applicants with a BS/BA degree to obtain teaching certification in fields of high demand with minimal cost. The Greenville County School District and the grassroots initiative Public Education Partners (PEP) also have collaborated to offer Greenville's Alternative Teacher Program (GATE). This unique program mentors, trains, and

prepares applicants who already have a degree in math and science to become educators in our district while teaching full-time. Dr. Royster advocated for ten additional paid days to be added to teacher contracts for professional development. He stressed the importance of communicating our concerns to the State General Assembly, emphasizing that education is essential to the economic vitality of our state and our democracy.

As members of the LWVGC, what can we do about the shortage of teachers and South Carolina's public education system? Educate and engage in conversations concerning this topic. Read and follow these selected bills pending in our SC House/Senate Education Committees through <https://legiscan.com> (S0244, S0157, S0065, S0148, S0233, S0232, H3195, H3140, H3453). Contact your local representatives in Columbia and let our elected officials know that public education is at the heart of our state's future prosperity and our nation's democracy.



## Notes on Greenville Water Event

On January 16, the Greenville League partnered with the local Sierra Club branch to host an event focusing on Greenville Water. Water Commissioner Deb Sofield presented to the group about the history of Greenville's water system, water quality and water quantity. As Ms. Sofield mentioned, Greenville Water is unusual as a business in that it tries to convince people to use less of what is being provided.

Some facts about Greenville Water:

- Greenville's first water supply line came from Paris Mountain, with a gravity line running from there to the city.
- Greenville Water is partnering with Roper Mountain Science Center to educate children about water and the importance of water conservation
- Greenville Water maintains over 3,000 miles of pipe –enough to cross the continental US if laid out end to end – and services over 500,000 people.
- They recently received an Athena Award for its commitment to women as employees and leaders.
- The Water Commission has three elected members and two ex-officio members. You can find out more about them [here](#). Want to attend a commission meeting? They're usually on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 8:15 am at the Greenville Water Office, 2nd floor, 407 West Broad Street in Greenville.

## VOTING SYSTEMS

The core of the League's mission is to strengthen our electoral democracy, which hinges on the power of the vote. Accordingly, one of the top priorities of our League at the state and local level is advocating for sensible voting systems that merit the confidence of South Carolina's voters.

It is highly likely that the South Carolina will purchase a new voting system in the not-distant future. Out of the available options, the League believes that the best voting system for our voters and for our state includes hand-marked paper ballots that are optically scanned at the precinct where they are cast. And this system is provided for in two companion bills in the South Carolina General Assembly, H. 3616 and S. 374, which the League supports.

Compared to the alternatives (like ballot-marking devices), a voting system with hand-marked paper ballots and optical scanners is better because it is more secure, more efficient, and less costly.

- A voting system with hand-marked paper ballots is more secure because the voter can have confidence that the vote they mark is the vote they made -- and by retaining the paper ballots, there is an easily auditable paper trail.
- It's more efficient because it's easy to set up additional paper-marking locations, which tends to reduce lines at polling places during busy times. If voting computers like ballot-marking devices are used, each polling place's capacity is limited by the number of computers available, and lines tend to back up.
- And it's less costly. Experts believe that a system with hand-marked paper ballots and optical scanners will cost around \$23 million for the state of South Carolina, which is a far cry less than the \$60 million being discussed for the less-secure, less-efficient alternative systems being discussed.

Voters deserve to be confident in their vote, which means having faith in their voting systems. We believe that the best, most fiscally responsible way to achieve that is with hand-marked paper ballots and optical scanners as laid out in H.3616 and S.374.

