



The Voter

October 2010

League of Women Voters of Sumter County

Sumter County Courts

The Sumter County LWV is conducting a series of programs highlighting the various courts that operate in Sumter County. The purpose is to inform citizens about the current judges, their duties and responsibilities, and the process by which they are elected, selected or appointed. League members and interested citizens are encouraged to attend. Refer to the box (top right) for additional information.

October Annual Membership Meeting

League of Women Voters of Sumter County
6:00 PM, Monday, October 11, 2010
Topic: Magistrate/Summary Court
Speaker: Judge Kathy Ward, Chief Magistrate

Location: Central Carolina Technical College
New Health Sciences Center
Seminar Room
133 South Main Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Contact: Dawn Adkins (803) 774-3337

An Independent & Diverse State Judiciary

The LWV continues to work to promote the importance of fair and impartial courts nationwide. The South Carolina LWV will kickoff its year-long, statewide Judicial Independence and Diversity Initiative by sponsoring a conference in Charleston on October 8th. The Leagues in South Carolina will focus on promoting diversity at all levels of the state judiciary to enhance the legitimacy of our system of justice in the eyes of an increasingly diverse public. The conference is free to all.

Please visit www.lwvsc.org for additional information.

Dues are due: \$45.00.



Mark Your Calendars! Future Programs

November 8, 2010, 6:00pm Circuit Court
December 13, 2010, 6:00pm Probate Court

Tech-Addicted Jurors

Apparently juror boredom is becoming a problem. According to an article in this month's *APA Monitor on Psychology*, "Every day in U.S. courts, jurors fall asleep, become frustrated by trial delays, seek out Google or Facebook on their cell phones, or daydream when they should be paying attention to trial testimony." Mistrials and overturned convictions (even in one murder case!) resulted when attorneys provided evidence that one or more jurors failed to pay attention during court proceedings.

Ryan J. Winter, Ph.D., MLS, and Jon Carbone, MA, authors of the *Monitor* article, suggest that tech-savvy jurors, who may be accustomed to the constant stimulation of cell phones, text messages, tweeting and web-browsing, may drift off when forced to sit still without their gadgets and listen to hours of testimony.

Winter and Carbone point out that in one case a juror who was cited with contempt when he fled the courthouse stated that extreme boredom was his motive for leaving against the judge's orders.

Shelley Carson, Ph.D., research psychologist and lecturer at Harvard University, admitted to being dismayed that "we cannot, as a citizenry, be counted upon to pay attention to events where we ourselves will issue verdicts that will affect the life of one or more of our fellow citizens for years to come, and possibly for life. Since when did we lose the ability to sit still and pay attention to matters of importance? Are we so addicted to the constant stimulation of our tech gadgets that our minds wander or we doze off when deprived of that stimulation?"



Sumter County LWV Local Officers		
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Source: *Huffington Post*;
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/shelley-carson-phd/unplugged-revisited-creat_b_721271.html