



Lighthouse

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

Jasper County Ocean Terminal Topic of February Meeting



William Bethea

Our February 10 membership meeting will be the occasion for our learning the very latest information on the proposed Jasper County Ocean Port from the man most knowledgeable on the subject, William L. Bethea, Jr.. Mr. Bethea is the elected chair of the Jasper Ocean Terminal Joint Project Office. "Joint" refers to the States of South Carolina and Georgia whose Governors and Legislatures have agreed to work together to make this enormous and complicated project a reality.

The recent meeting of the Committee on January 25 will have provided an update on the state of negotiations between the two states, as well as progress on the many complicated issues to be resolved among government agencies at all levels, federal, state and local. We are very fortunate to be able to meet with Mr. Bethea at this time.

The meeting on February 10 will begin at 10:00 a.m. and will be held at Hilton Head Public Service District, 21 Oak Park Drive off Mathews Drive. Guests are welcome.

Sally McGarry, Vice President and Program Chair

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Mayor Peeples Doesn't Disappoint

In his "State of the Town" talk to League members and guests at our January 13 meeting, Mayor Tom Peeples touched on roughly twenty-five topics! He began his hour-long description of projects, proposals and possibilities with the statement that Hilton Head Island is in "wonderful" financial shape. Planning for down times with generous reserves in all categories, the town has earned an AA+ bond rating, the highest of any town in South Carolina.

In looking to the future, the Mayor pointed out that the three legs of the Town's economic development policy to date have been tourism, retirees and building/developing. With the Town close to build-out, the latter has about reached the limit of its potential. What will take its place? To help answer this question, the Mayor has appointed a Task Force for the Future whose 13 members will, he hopes, "come up with three or four great ideas." Redevelopment is one issue on their agenda. On this subject, the Mayor suggested that there might be a time when the Town could enter into public/private partnerships.

On the subject of recycling, it appears that the Town's efforts may bear fruit in February. Whatever the solution, the Mayor stressed that bringing containers to the curb will not be an option, as that would not reflect our "Hilton Head Island look."

The "new thing" the Mayor suggested, as you may have read in The Island Packet, is annexation. He would like the Town to annex the bridges bringing traffic into the Town in order to have a say in what is done there. He would like to see Windmill Harbor and Blue Heron Point choose to become part of the Island to solve their traffic problem and even lower their taxes.

Other topics which Mayor Peeples addressed included Port Royal beach re-

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From the Presidents



As we celebrate the 90th anniversary of the League of Women Voters, we are browsing through a file given to us by Sally McGarry, guardian of the LWVHHI file cabinet, highlighting the important steps to establish the local League.

It turns out the League of Women Voters of Hilton Head is about the same age as the Town of Hilton Head. The Town was incorporated in 1983. Interest in establishing a League was strong in 1981-82, but since the Town was not incorporated yet, the status of the group was "Members at Large" (MAL). There were 25 members in 1981. After the Town was incorporated we became a Provisional League.

Issues important to the early group were the environment, water quality, coastal resources, public participation in land use planning, local government, local schools, and voter education. By 1984-85 we were monitoring the Town Comprehensive Plan, which we are still doing today.

As a Provisional League we were required to study our Town and publish our first "Know Your Town," which we did in 1986. That same year we were recognized as a full-fledged League, and began publishing our newsletter. "The Lighthouse."

In the mid to late 80's we studied beach erosion

& re-nourishment, hazardous waste disposal, the Town Land Management Ordinance, Town Council terms, and water conservation. We continued our interest in education, of course, and were among the supporters of full day kindergarten. We registered voters and conducted Candidates Meetings.

By the time that the League celebrated its 70th birthday in 1990 we had published a second edition of "Know Your Town", and published the third edition in 1993. We looked at restructuring state government, the feasibility of a Town Police Force, the Town Comprehensive Plan, growth management, and Campaign Finance Reform. We worked to get the "Motor Voter" Law enacted (Voter Registration at the Department of Motor Vehicles when obtaining or renewing driver's license.) We supported the school bond passed in 1995. We studied charter schools and our consensus on charter school legislation became the model for concurrence by local Leagues.

Our first "Voter's Guide" was published in 1998 and in 1999 we had 75 members. By this time we had honed our skills at our usual activities of registering voters, conducting candidates meetings, and publishing information that the public needed.



LWVHHI Co-Presidents
Ginny Ghiradeli Barbara Swift

The early years after the turn of the century saw increased activity in participating in state and national studies and our consensus process. Important issues were world trade and immigration at the national level, and taxation and alternative voting systems at the state level. On the local level we were active in opposition to the airport runway extension, and after study we supported Tax Increment Financing. Our Education Committee was very active and important to many members.

Today we have 92 members, and we have expanded our mailing list for the Lighthouse using e-mail. E-mail also facilitates communication among members, committee chairs, and board members. We changed our web site provider this year, and our site has been improved and updated. Take a peek: LWVHHI.org.

Looking over old issues of the Lighthouse is an interesting rainy day activity, and we come away with an appreciation of the work done by others before us.

Save The Date!
LWV's 90th Birthday
Party
February 28, 2010
Connie & Jerry
Voight's home

Legislative Advocacy Day

Each year when the South Carolina Legislature is in session, the League of Women Voters of South Carolina and the American Association of University Women of South Carolina sponsor a "Legislative Advocacy Day." It's an all day event, featuring guest speakers in the morning, and a visit with members of our Legislative delegation in the afternoon. Speakers are:

Nancy Vinson, program director, SC Coastal Conservation League on "Environmental Impacts on Student Achievement." "Health Impact on Student Performance"

A panel moderated by Dr. Tiffany Williams, MUSC College of Nursing:

Dr. James Stallworth, USC Medical School; Obesity in Children
Zenica Chapman, SC Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
Cindy Poole, Healthy Learners; Access To Health Care Through Schools

After lunch, Dr. Michael Fanning, executive director, Olde English Consortium will talk about "How to Get More Blood from the Turnip

After that speaker we will adjourn to Statehouse complex to meet with legislators and attend meetings. We will have a carpool, leaving very, very early in the morning. If you would like to go, please call Barbara 342-3383 or Ginny 363-6404 BEFORE FEB. 18.

Ginny Ghirardelli

Renewing Membership

It is time to start thinking about renewing your League Membership. I know April 30th is a couple months away, but it is astonishing how fast the time goes. When you receive your renewal in the mail, please return it as soon as possible. We like to have everyone renew by April 30th. The dues remain the same as last year— \$45.00 single membership and \$65.00 for a family.

We are also planning our prospective membership tea on April 9th. Please keep the tea in mind, plan to attend and, of course, bring a friend or someone who may be interested in joining the league. More information on the tea will follow and if you wish to refer someone feel free to contact me with their name and address so an invitation can be sent. Ellen Forwalk - Membership Chairman 681-3096

Hot Off the Press

We expect to pick up 4,000 copies of the revised "2010 Guide to Elected Officials" from Curry Printing Company in early February. Many thanks to Carroll Williams, League member, artist and graphic designer, who did all the lay-out. Gratitude also goes to Joan Kinne-Shulman and Pat Present for capable proof-reading and editing, and to the Hilton Head Island - Bluffton Chamber of Commerce for its financial support.

As usual, we will distribute copies to members with membership renewal forms in March, and we would appreciate assistance in spreading them throughout the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton area. If you can help us do that, please contact me (jordannah@mindspring.com). In the past, distribution points have included: Chamber of Commerce, Town Halls, libraries, schools, retirement facilities, PUD offices, realtors, HH PSD, and our donors. If you can think of additional locations that should have them, please let me know.

Niki Jordan
681-5664





Making Democracy Work Award

The League of Women Voters of the United States and local Leagues across the country are recognizing the 90th anniversary of our founding by selecting an outstanding citizen to honor in a special way by awarding a "Making Democracy Work Award." The Hilton Head League has chosen Harriet Keyserling of Beaufort as our award recipient.

Harriet served in the South Carolina Legislature from 1976 to 1993, was the first woman to serve on the Beaufort County Council, and she was instrumental in establishing the League of Women Voters of Beaufort.

We are so pleased that she has accepted our invitation and we look forward to our 90th birthday party on Feb. 28, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the home of Connie and Jerry Voight. Please see our invitation, respond, and join us!

Ginny Ghirardelli

State Advocacy

Thanks to the leadership of LWVSC, our League has been busy trying to make a difference in Columbia. Sometimes it's not easy. Just as we get ready to send our views to our representatives, we learn that the situation has changed. We are reminded that effective advocacy requires informing ourselves as well as we can and taking the appropriate action at the right time. We look forward to sharing more information on the ins and outs of advocacy at the March 10 general membership meeting to be held at the PSD Building at 10:00 a.m. Participants in a panel will be Fred Washington, Chairman of the Beaufort County School District; John Safay, Member of the Hilton Head Island Town Council and Garrett Budds, South Coast Director of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League. They will discuss advocacy using issues of local interest as examples. We hope this meeting will be helpful both to organizations and individuals who want to take action on issues. One bill that has been of great concern to us is H3272, known as the

Point of Sale bill. It has passed the House and, as of the *Lighthouse* deadline, has not yet been voted up or down in the Senate. If enacted, the bill would change the provision of the 2006 Property Tax Relief Act (Act 388) that adjusts the value, for tax purposes, of sold properties to their full market value at time of sale. H3272 would cap the increase in value to 15%. LWVSC and LWVHHI oppose the bill, because it would reduce the amount of money available for local governments by about \$44 million, including \$20 million for schools, annually. It also tries to change tax law in a "piecemeal" manner rather than comprehensively. The League is also opposing the Voter Photo Identification bill, H3418, which has been passed in the House but, as of Jan. 22, not in the Senate. Reasons for our opposition include that there have been no documented cases of voter impersonation, the state cannot afford the estimated \$850,000 it would cost and vulnerable populations would be discouraged from voting.

Fran Holt

Mayor Peeples Doesn't Disappoint

(Continued from page 1)

nourishment, Town promotion of the Heritage Golf Tournament, Marshland Road repaving, dredging, aquatic improvements at the Recreation Center, more major events to attract tourists with Coligny Beach Park a possible venue, a Master Plan for Mitchellville, arts groups working together, 6 lanes on I-26 and I-95, creating WiFi areas around town, the Dove Street lights, scheduling at parks and athletic fields, and the Master Plan for the Airport (The Town is committed to having the airport here.)

It was a detailed and far-reaching talk, You should have been there!

A CALL TO ARMS

Our league has a public policy position to monitor and act upon as needed: The Hilton Head Island Comprehensive Plan.

I have been observing (monitoring) the Hilton Head Island Town Planning Commission Comprehensive Plan Committee during its process of rewriting the town's Comprehensive Plan. Our board has asked me to chair a committee to decide if our league should take any action regarding this plan. We need to decide by the end of February.

If you'd like to participate in this decision you can do so from the warm comfort of your own den. Just curl up with a good computer and go to the town's website at www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov. Click on "Charting the Island's Future Comprehensive Plan Update." After perusing that information you can click on "Comprehensive Plan Elements" in the left hand column. Then you can click on the elements that interest you and hopefully peruse enough to get a feel for the new plan. Each element offers background information on several topics and follows each with an "Implications for the Comprehensive Plan" paragraph or two. At the end of each element is a "Conclusion: Key Issues and Implementation Strategies". These are key sections.

After we've done this homework then we can decide:

1. Do we want to support this new Comprehensive Plan?
 2. Do we want to mention specific parts that fit league positions (local, state and national)?
- For instance, the Natural Resources Element includes preservation of wetlands, beach renourishment and town wide recycling.

What should the action be? Have our president make a statement to the Town Council public hearing when they discuss the adoption of this plan? Other?

You can check league positions at www.lwvhhi.org, www.lwvsc.org and www.lwv.org.

This committee can operate totally through email and/or we can get together at least once for discussion.

Here's hoping a lot of you will help with this endeavor because the more the better. And, actually, you might even enjoy it. There's some interesting stuff in the elements. Dive in and let me know what you think at 681-8051 or ljcoffin@aol.com.

Program Planning

What do **YOU** want our League or the National League to study next year? What do **YOU** think priorities for action should be when LWVUS talks to Congress? All members are invited to join the Board at the end of February 4th's Board Meeting to review existing positions at the local and national levels and recommend new directions for the coming year. Savannah Bank on US 278 between Red Roof Inn and Hargray. Call Sally McGarry, 342-9254, if you plan to attend.



League of Woman Voters of
 Hilton Head Island
 PO Box 23862
 Hilton Head Island,
 South Carolina
 29925

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FEBRUARY
 Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2009—2010

Board Meetings

Thursday, February 4, 9:45 am at Savannah Bank,
 852 Wm. Hilton Parkway

Thursday, March 4 , 9:45 am at Savannah Bank,
 852 Wm. Hilton Parkway

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

Membership Meeting

Wednesday, February 10, at 10:00 A.M.
 Hilton Head PSD, 21 Oak Park Drive. Speaker: William
 L Bethea, Jr., Chair of the Jasper Ocean Terminal Joint
 Project Office.

**LWV'S 90th birthday party on Feb. 28, from
 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. at the home of Connie and
 Jerry Voight. Watch for flier.**

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents:
 Ginny Ghirardelli 363- 6404
 Barbara Swift 342-3383
 Vice-President, Program Chair:
 Sally McGarry 342-9254
 Treasurer: Janet Law 671-4280
 Co-Secretaries:
 Anita Holcslaw 686-4085
 Caroline McVitty 681-6124

BOARD

Fund-raising: Donna Russell 837-7022
 Government Issues/Observer Corps:
 Joan Kinne-Shulman 842-9246
 Hospitality: Andrea Bhatt 681-7590
 Membership: Ellen Forwalk 681-3096
 Newsletter: Bob McGarry 342-9254
 Public Relations/Publicity:
 Karen Wessel 682-3397
 Voters Services:
 Eileen Drehwing 681-4627