



# Lighthouse

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

## “The Ins and Outs of Advocacy”

At our Wednesday, March 10, member meeting, the League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island will present a program on advocacy, the art of gaining support for a policy position you have espoused leading to action to implement that policy. Lobbying is another good word for it. We will meet at Hilton Head Public Service District, 21 Oak Park Drive, at 10:00 a.m.

The purpose of the meeting is to share information on effective ways to advocate using issues of local interest as examples. The program will begin with three panelists knowledgeable about the art of advocacy. They are Hilton Head Island Town Councilman John Safay speaking about the smoking ban campaign; President of the Beaufort County Board of Education Fred Washington looking at reforming state education funding; and Garrett Budds, South Coast Director of the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League in Beaufort addressing environmental issues. After their initial presentations, the panelists will have an opportunity to question one another. Then questions will be taken from the audience. The public is invited.

Sally McGarry, Vice President/Program Chair

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## Jasper Ocean Terminal Talk Sparked Much Interest



Jonathan Thomas

The speaker at our February 10 member meeting, Jonathan Thomas of the maritime engineering firm Moffatt & Nichol, proved to be an excellent substitute for William Bethea, our scheduled speaker. Mr. Bethea had been called to Columbia to appear before one of the legislative committees.

Jon Thomas emphasized throughout his excellent power point presentation the huge economic benefits which the building and operation of the Jasper Ocean Terminal will bring to the states of South Carolina and Georgia in construction and port operation jobs, new economic activity, and state and local taxes. First however, there are many hurdles to be overcome.

Talk of building a port in Jasper County had gone on for 23 years, with the two states bringing lawsuits against one another and accomplishing nothing. It eventually became clear that the project could never be realized until they agreed to cooperate. In 2007, all lawsuits were resolved and a Bi-State Port Task Force was created by agreement between due with a ceremonial per Ocean Terminal ated, and it is this Bethea. Still to be accomplished, and then by the U.S.



Governors Sanford and Pur-exchange of neckties. A Jas-Joint Project Office was crebody that is chaired by William complished is an Interstate be approved by the Legisla-South Carolina and Georgia Congress, as it involves inter-state commerce.

(Continued on page 6)

## From the Presidents



After the South Carolina Legislature convened in January, there were several "Calls To Action" from the LWVSC, and we responded appropriately on two major issues: voting rights, and education funding. We also met with leaders of other groups: The South Carolina School Boards Association to discuss lobbying efforts on education funding, and the Beaufort County Education Association to discuss registering teachers to vote, and encouraging them to vote.

All the while, we are thinking about membership, and applaud the efforts of Ellen Forwalk and her committee; our membership has grown from 89 last year to 98 members this year, and we continue to look for those members who wish to be more involved in League activities.

Recently we learned that the League of Women Voters of Bluffton probably won't continue to function as a League. We wrote a letter to the people on their membership list inviting them to join our League, and suggested beginning a discussion on helping to meet their needs as well.

At a meeting attended by us, Fran Holt, Tamela Maxim, President of LWVB, Barbara Zia, President of LWVSC, and two other State Board members, we discussed many ideas and options. The members of the Bluffton group could become Members At Large (MAL's), they could join us, or we could expand our programs to a wider geographical area. Two ideas that surfaced are monthly luncheon meetings, or reviving the old "Unit System" of the League. Members who have been in other Leagues will remember this. It would mean perhaps a Bluffton Unit and a Hilton Head Island Unit, of one League and one board of directors. As we are just beginning this dialogue, it will be very important to learn what our members want. Any significant change would require a vote of the membership at our Annual Meeting. We welcome your comments or ideas, and will keep you posted as we learn more.



LWVHHI Co-Presidents  
Ginny Ghiradeli Barbara Swift

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### Membership

I would like to welcome three new members to the League: Andrea Bhatt ,Dr. Kathleen Boggs and Mary Frances Stahler.

This past year we have been successful in recruiting several new members who are now taking an active part in the League. We would like to thank them for their participation and greatly needed help.

I mentioned last month the membership renewal drive is under way. You will soon be receiving in the mail your renewal form. Please take a few minutes to review the form since it is different from last year. You may see something interesting that will entice you to become more involved in league activities. Please try and return the form by April 30th or even sooner so we may keep our records current.

The plans for the April 9th tea are under way. Please plan to attend and bring a friend or someone who may be interested in joining the League. 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.

## Legislative Lessons on Education in SC

If you want to feel the pulse of the legislative process, try visiting the office of an active education group located blocks from the state capital, while the Assembly is in session.

Ginny Ghirardelli and I did just that by attending a meeting at the SC School Board Association office in Columbia on February 9<sup>th</sup>. LWVSC President Barbara Zia scheduled the meeting to follow-up on the agenda formulated by a task force in June '09 to increase the League's impact on the quality of public education in SC. Seven of us sought advice from Dr. Paul Krohne, Executive Director of SCSBA, on where various bills stood in the Assembly and how LWV could be most effective.

Our conclusion: The primary role for the League is in doing more of what it does best: voter registration, candidate forums and education of the voters. We should coordinate with other groups in our areas to increase voter registration among school staff, which historically is abysmally low. Legislators will begin to pay attention to the public schools if the teachers and parents of the students speak as a bloc with their ballots. We need to work closely with the district superintendent and to build coalitions with such groups as RISE SC (Reform, Improve, Support Public Education), Chamber of Commerce and parent-school asso-

ciations.

Various bills and issues discussed:

"Point of Sale" bill (H3272) - The SC Association of Realtors is promoting this bill to eliminate reassessment when a property is sold, in the belief that it will increase real estate sales. Opponents include the SCSBA, the Municipal Assn., SC Counties Assn. and the LWVSC because it would mean even more revenue loss for local governments and schools. The two sides worked for weeks on a compromise and finally reached a deal the very morning we were in Columbia. Later that evening the Senate approved the compromise on a voice vote, but the following day, on a roll-call vote, the bill failed by three votes to attract the necessary 2/3 majority and was sent back to the Finance Committee. The setback is significant but may not be lethal, because the bill retains its place on the calendar and could be recalled for a third reading at any time. The good news is that the various compromises have whittled down the bill's possible fiscal impact on local governments and schools. The Board of Economic Advisors now estimates that the loss would be less than earlier versions, i.e. down from more than \$44 million to about \$34.9 million.

Revising Act 388 to fix some of the damage it

inflicted on schools - Dr. Krohne assured us that nothing will happen this year. No one is talking about making even minor changes on which everyone agrees. However, legislators are hearing clearly from local schools that the current situation is untenable.

"Comprehensive tax reform" and the legislature's new advisory Tax Commission - No real reform will occur this year. Most of us feel the Commission needs to become a permanent group that is allowed to consider revising Act 388, which prevents property taxes on owner-occupied homes from funding schools. As predicted by supporters of schools, it is proving to be disastrous for education.

H4409 (sponsored by Rep. Chalk) - to provide some EFA (Education Finance Act) funds for certain school districts like Beaufort and Charleston that currently receive nothing because they have high property values. Dr. Krohne said the bill has not yet been assigned to a subcommittee and won't go anywhere this year.

State Charter School Bill - should be watched because it makes local (not just state, as currently allowed) funding available to state charter schools.

Goodbye Minimally Adequate campaign - Many

*(Continued on page 6)*



## Join in Spreading the Census 2010 Information



As a Partner with the U.S. Census Bureau in this year of the decennial Census, we are developing a schedule of events for disseminating information about how critically important it is for every person living in Beaufort County to return the Census form. As you know, we offered our assistance to Mayor Thomas Peebles at our January meeting to serve as the Complete Count Committee for Hilton Head Island. At our February meeting, nine members volunteered for this effort. We need many more.

Please telephone or e-mail one of us if you can give an hour or two for the following events:

March 14 St. Patrick's Day Parade 3:00 p.m. on  
Walk the Parade route handing out Census mementos  
Staff a table handing out information, answering questions

March 20 Earth Day, "Green Day" 11:00 – 4:00  
at both Piggly-Wiggly Stores(Choose your time)  
and at BiLo  
- Give out "green" Census bags for groceries  
Staff a table handing out information, as above

We have been working with Paul Shepherd of the Beaufort County Census Office and Marcy Benson of the Town of Hilton Head Island to obtain materials to hand out and arrange the above schedules.

If you know of locations where you could put up a poster or leave pens and post-it notes as reminders of the mailing of Census forms in mid-March, please contact one of us.

Donna Russell Sally McGarry  
837-7022 or [Russdon@hargray.com](mailto:Russdon@hargray.com) 342-9254 or [smcgarry@roadrunner.com](mailto:smcgarry@roadrunner.com)

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### In Case You Missed It; The following was published on the editorial page of the Island Packet Jan. 29, 2010:

#### **Voter photo ID a solution without a problem**

The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. We monitor activity affecting voting, and we believe legislation recently proposed to alter voting procedures deserves the public's attention.

The South Carolina House of Representatives has passed and sent to the Senate House bill H3418, commonly known as the voter photo ID bill. The League believes this measure should not become law for several reasons:

*It is a barrier to voting.* A voter would be required to show a driver's license or military ID to vote. There are 343,250 registered voters in South Carolina who do not have a driver's license or an ID issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles. Most people affected by this requirement would be minorities, senior citizens, the handicapped, and the poor. To address that, the bill would require that the State pay for the DMV-issued ID card. But cost of the ID is not the only barrier; it presents extraordinary burdens for some people to get to the location required to get the ID. Our large rural population would incur extra transportation cost.

*It is expensive.* The Office of State Budget estimates the cost of providing "free" photo ID's at \$850,000 annually. In addition, legal challenges to the law are likely, and the cost to defend it would be a waste of taxpayer resources.

*It is unnecessary.* Proponents say the voter photo ID is a way to prevent voter fraud. But there is no evidence this kind of fraud exists. No state election law violations or prosecutions were uncovered by league research. S.C. Election Commission officials also say they know of no instances of this kind of fraud.

If Voter Photo ID were implemented, the State Elections Commission would need

## Honoring Harriet Keyserling By Flo Rosse

This year the League of Women Voters is celebrating its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, focusing on the theme Making Democracy Work. It is an appropriate theme for the League as through the years it has been instrumental in helping to expand access to our democracy to everyone through championing voting rights, literacy, and information on legislative issues at all levels of government. It is fitting that on this anniversary we honor one of our own members who has, through her courage and commitment, helped to make democracy work here in Beaufort County and the state of South Carolina. We are pleased to honor Harriet Keyserling today.

Harriet Keyserling began her political life in SC in 1972 working on voter registration. Like many other voter registration offices across our country at this time, the Beaufort office was open for limited hours during the week, never during lunch hour, and never on weekends. There were no volunteer registrars sitting at tables in various public places to encourage and enlist people to register to vote. She and a friend decided they needed to find a way to open up the voter registration system and begin a voter education program—that is how and why the Beaufort League was started. While Harriet would not be the first president of the League, she

would volunteer to “observe” county government for the League of Women Voters. She was amazed, as a city girl from New York, to learn how county government impacted our lives. Week after week, she observed the Beaufort County Council realizing little by little how differently she would have voted on



Harriet Keyserling

some issues. That seemed to be all it took for Harriet to realize that if she wanted to see things done differently and if she was committed to the League’s priority items—education reform, day care, environmental, consumer protection, mandatory deposits for bottles and cans and a waiting period for purchasing handguns she would have to do more than observe. So as a founding

member of the League in Beaufort and at the age of 55, Harriet became the first woman to run for the Beaufort County Council.

Because of her active life and her marriage to Dr. Keyserling, who no doubt delivered half the babies in Beaufort County, Harriet won her first election handily.

True to her training as a League member, and according to Dick Riley, former Gov. of SC, Harriet was “more given to quiet research, serious conversation, and careful organization—and less to the smoke-filled room politics of much big talk and little listening.”

Her political career culminated in her service in the SC House of Representatives where she served with distinction from 1977 to 1993. She was only the second non-lawyer to serve on the House Judiciary Committee. She also

served on the Education, Public Works, and Ways and Means committees, the Joint Legislative Committee on Energy and chaired the Joint Legislative Committee on Cultural Affairs from its inception until 1991.

She served Governor Dick Riley as an advisor on energy issues, and from 1979 to 1982, was a member of Congress’ Advisory Panel on Nuclear Waste Disposal.

Major legislation with



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## Jasper Ocean Terminal Talk Sparked Much Interest

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Mr. Thomas's firm has done extensive work (1) to determine the market for a new port, given the close proximity of the Ports of Savannah and Charleston, (2) to work out an agreement with the U.S. Corps of Engineers which currently dredges 7 million cubic yards of material from the Savannah River annually and deposits it on the future port site, (3) to determine the future economic benefits, (4) to collect data on water quality in the Savannah River and other environmental impacts, in preparation for a federal Environmental Impact Statement, and (5) to do preliminary design of the 10-berth terminal. Of a total 8 to 10 year design and construction period, Year #1 has been completed and Year #2 is underway.

Obviously, it will be many years before we can plan a field trip to the Jasper Ocean Port!

## Comprehensive Plan

The Comprehensive Plan study group has been reading the CP (Comprehensive Plan) on the town's web site and conferring by e-mail. We expect to have a recommendation for our board in time for the March 4 meeting.

There has been a recent addition to the web site that gives a concise overview of what the CP is all about. To view it go to [www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov](http://www.hiltonheadislandsc.gov), click on Charting the Island's Future Comprehensive Plan Update, then on the left click on Introduction and Vision. If you want to delve further you can click on parts of interest which will link you to them.

Ann Coffin

## Legislative Lessons on Education in SC

*(Continued from page 3)*  
legislators are hoping this won't come up because they don't want to vote against it in an election year, yet they worry about its cost.

A last hint from Dr. Krohne: Legislators MIGHT pay attention to positive practices that are occurring in adjacent states like GA and NC.

The bleak summary: we had best focus on the long term, because no progress on improving public education in SC is expected this year.

Niki Jordan, Chair  
Education Committee

LWVUS News:

## Ruth S. Shur Fellows Selected

After a rigorous application process, the LWVUS has selected 12 national coaches to be Ruth S. Shur Fellows. They will help to expand the number of state and local Leagues that can participate in our successful program based on the Membership Recruitment Initiative and building in leadership development. Coaches will receive national training, participate in regional and state training sessions for Leagues, and receive ongoing support from the LWVUS. Congratulations to Julie Arneith (WI), Georgia DeGregorio (NY), Caroline Emmons-Schramm (FL), Lynn Gordon (VA), Nikki Harris (CA), Diane Haskell (MD), Florence Hedeem (MN), Marcia Hirshberg (MA), **Shayna Howell (SC)**, Donna Marie Lossing Jones (OH), Gini McGirr (AZ) and Carolie Mullan (TX). LWVUS Board member Carol Reimers will coordinate the Fellows. Thank you to all the Fellows and to all who applied to be part of this important effort!

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Site

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## Honoring Harriet Keyserling

*(Continued from page 5)*

which she is associated is wide-ranging. She was instrumental in the passage of the comprehensive Education Improvement Act (EIA) which addressed such issues as academic standards, teacher evaluation and salaries, student testing, and programs for special education and advanced placement.

With Governor Riley's support, Ms. Keyserling helped to create a Task Force on the Arts which laid the foundation for building an infrastructure for the arts in SC. In 1985 the Joint Legislative Committee on Cultural Affairs, an entity created by legislation and at Harriet Keyserling's urging was created and dedicated to enhancing cultural activities in SC like the Spoleto Festival and Penn Center.

Harriet retired from the House of Representatives in 1992 and has remained active on the Spoleto Festival Board of Directors, the South Carolina Coastal Conservation League, the Beaufort Arts Council, and the Palmetto Project. She is the author of "Against the Tide, One Woman's Political Struggle". Numerous papers known as the Harriet Keyserling Papers, 1965-1998 document her life.

Over the years, Ms Keyserling has been the recipient of numerous awards. Among them is the prestigious Order of the Palmetto, SC highest civilian award from Governor Jim Hodges. In 2009 the Conservation Voters

of SC gave Harriet the Green Tea Award, and in 2008 Ms. Keyserling received the Women of Achievement Award and the Pioneer Award.

Today the Hilton Head Island League of Women Voters wishes to present to Harriet Keyserling the Making Democracy Work award for her notable civic and legislative achievements. She is an inspiration to all of us who hope to make a difference through our participation in the work of the League. Thank you Harriet—from all of us.

February 28, 2010

Delivered at our League's Celebration of the 90th Anniversary of LWVUS

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## Hunger and Homelessness in the Low Country

On Wednesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at 7PM, there will be a panel discussion about hunger and homelessness in the Low Country. The discussion will be held at Congregation Beth Yam, 4501 Meeting Street with a panel consisting of Lisa Sulka, Mayor of Bluffton; Tom Peebles, Mayor of Hilton Head Island, and representatives from the Beaufort County School District, the Children's Center, Deep Well and Family Promise.

Admission is a donation of non-perishable food items.

Barbara Swift

## In Case You Missed It

*(Continued from page 4)*

to conduct an extensive voter education campaign to assure that everyone is aware of the change. Poll clerks, managers and county election officials would also require training on new procedures. Education campaigns and extra training would also impact the budget. And voters can expect the voting process to be longer, as poll workers request the ID and compare photos and signatures for every voter.

Longer lines at the polls discourage qualified voters.

The right to vote, and to have that vote counted, is an essential civil right. Unduly restrictive photo ID requirements are one of the greatest threats to fair and equal voting rights today. State legislators should encourage full participation of the State's citizenry, not needlessly restrict the right to vote.

Virginia Ghirardelli  
Barbara Swift  
Co-Presidents  
League of Women Voters  
of Hilton Head Island





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

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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**FEBRUARY**  
Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2009—2010

**Board Meetings**

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

Thursday, April 1, 9:45 am at Savannah Bank, 852  
 Wm. Hilton Parkway

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

**Membership Meeting**

Wednesday, March 10, at 10:00 A.M.  
 Hilton Head PSD, 21 Oak Park Drive.  
 "The Ins and Outs of Advocacy"

**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