



Lighthouse

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

Programs September 2011 – May 2012

Programs planned for the coming League season should be interesting, informative and productive. Some meetings will be in Bluffton and some on Hilton Head Island. Please mark your calendars now, and plan on attending and participating. As of mid-July, plans are as follows.

September 21 at the **Low Country Presbyterian Church**, 10 Simmonsville Road (corner of Hwy. 278 and Simmonsville Rd.), **Bluffton**

9:30 Member appreciation social time with refreshments

10:00 Panel discussion on **Saving Our Rivers and Lands**

Members of Panel:

Garret Budds - Director of Land Protection, Beaufort County Open Land Trust; former Director of the Coastal Conservation League's South Coast Office

David Harter – Board Chairman, Port Royal Sound Foundation (successor to Friends of the River); an original member of the Beaufort County Clean Water Task Force; board member of SC Wildlife Federation; long-time area resident

Fran Marscher - author, environmentalist, former editor of *The Island Packet*, League member, Bluffton native

Mr. Budds' presentation will include information about the probable 2012 county bond referendum to fund the purchase of additional critical lands. Mr. Harter will discuss efforts to save our rivers. Ms. Marscher will provide a historical perspective.

11:00 Q & A

October 12, 7 p.m., Hilton Head High School Visual Arts Building
Panel discussion on **Judicial Diversity in South Carolina**

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Do We Need To Improve Judicial Diversity In South Carolina?

The 6th Amendment guarantees the accused the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury. Although the phrase "jury of one's peers" is not included in the Amendment, courts interpret "peer" to mean "equal", i.e., the jury pool must include a cross section of the population of the community in terms of gender, race, and national origin and must not exclude or intentionally nar-

row any particular population. That is all well and good, but what about the judges who oversee these jury trials – or those who sit in sole judgment of the defendant or sit en banc on an appellate court?

According to the Brennan Center for Justice: "The United States is more diverse than ever, but its state judges are not. While we recognize that citizens are entitled to a

jury of their peers who will be drawn from a pool that reflects the surrounding community, Americans who enter the courtroom often face a predictable presence on the bench: a white male. This is the case despite increasing diversity within law school populations and within state bars across the country.

"Most of the legal disputes

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From the President



The summer is off to a big start as your LWVHHI/Bluffton Area board plans for the 2011-2012 year, which we officially start with our Membership Meeting on Wednesday, September 21 at 9:30 a.m. at the Low Country Presbyterian Church, 10 Simonsville Road, Bluffton. Our new Vice President, Fran Holt, has been busy planning our program calendar with interesting speakers and topics and at least a few meetings in Bluffton. A list of meeting dates and speakers is included in this newsletter. New Membership Chair, Julie Wittig, has done an outstanding job making the changes necessary as a result of our new name, following up with new members, and making an effort to contact those members who have not renewed.

In June, several members met with our new Education Chair, Pamela Hollinger, to discuss and provide feedback to the SC State League regarding their education study of teacher evaluation criteria and methods. Our task was given to us with very little lead time,

and I feel very lucky indeed that Pamela agreed to chair this important committee.

In June and July, I attended public forums on the county redistricting plans, which are necessary as a result of the 2010 Census. There are several plans making their way through the process, on both the state and local levels; final plans must pass muster with the Department of Justice. In any case, all citizens on Hilton Head Island and in Bluffton will be affected in one way or another by how the lines are redrawn.

Our State League asks us to assume that the Voter ID bill will remain law. They are working on a plan to help ease the burdens of providing documents in person to the DMV for those without driver's licenses, military IDs or Passport. Of particular concern are the elderly (SC issued no birth certificates until 1919) and women, who may have had various name changes that would require documentation. The law will be in effect by the 2012 elections so public



LWVHHI/BLUFFTON
President

education and planning are a high priority.

League Leaders Day is scheduled for August 27 in Columbia. All League members may attend. If you are interested in learning more about League initiatives, grass roots organizing, membership growth, etc...please contact LWVSC Co-Presidents Barbara Zia and Peg Brown at ziab1@comcast.net or pegjobrown@yahoo.com or check out the information on the LWVSC website.

I hope you are all enjoying your summers and look forward to seeing you in September. Thanks to all board members and committee chairs, past and present, for helping me climb the learning curve.

Request for Nominations by *Lighthouse* Readers

In an effort to encourage more capable women to serve in government, our League plans to honor several outstanding women from Hilton Head Island and the Bluffton Area, who are currently serving in government in either elected or appointed positions.

We will honor them at our December 7 holiday luncheon at the Moss Creek Clubhouse. We would like you, the readers of the *Lighthouse*, to submit your nominations for candidates to be honored. Please send your nominations to franholthhbl@gmail.com no later than September 15. Thank you.

Fran Holt

Programs September 2011 – May 2012

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Please see separate article by Caroline McVitty, chair for this major event, elsewhere in this *Lighthouse*.

November 9, 10:00 a.m., Hilton Head Public Service District Building, 23 Oak Park Dr., HHI

Meeting led by Education Committee Chair Pamela Hollinger on **education issues**, primarily trying to reach consensus for LWVUS regarding the **role of the federal government in education**.

December 7, Moss Creek Clubhouse in Bluffton

Tentative schedule is 11:30: social time, noon: lunch followed by a talk by **Beaufort County School District Superintendent Valerie Truesdale**. A few outstanding women who work for government (elected or appointed) will be honored.

January 11, 10:00 a.m., Hilton Head Island location TBA

Speaker and subject TBA -(probably State of the Town – HHI)

February 8, 10:00 a.m., Hilton Head Island location TBA

Program planning for LWVUS and LWVHHI/BLUFFTON
Speaker and subject TBA

March 14, 10:00 a.m., Low Country Presbyterian Church, Bluffton

Speaker and subject TBA (probably State of the Town – Bluffton)

April 11, 10:00 a.m., Low Country Presbyterian Church, Bluffton

Speaker and subject TBA

May 9, 11:30 a.m., Hilton Head Island restaurant or club TBA

Annual meeting, luncheon
Speaker and subject TBA



**VISIT OUR WEB
SITE**

lwvghi.org

Do We Need To Improve Judicial Diveristy In South Carolina?

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adjudicated in America are heard in state courts. As such, they must serve a broad range of constituencies and an increasingly diverse public. So why are state judiciaries consistently less diverse than the communities they serve?*

(*See http://www.brennancenter.org/content/resource/diversity_report/ for the full report.)

For some answers to these and other perplexing questions concerning judicial diversity in our own state of South Carolina, the LWVHHI/Bluffton Area is hosting a distinguished panel discussion.

Caroline McVitty
Judicial Project Coordinator

**Wednesday, October 12,
2011 @ 7:00pm**
**Hilton Head High School
Visual Performing
Arts Center (VPAC)**
Distinguished panel to include SC Senator Tom Davis, SC Representative Andrew "Andy" Patrick, The Honorable Judge Carmen T. Mullen (14th Judicial Circuit), and Kelly Jolley, Special Counsel to the McNair Law Firm.
The panel discussion is free and a public reception will follow.



Membership

As the new Membership Chair, I would like to welcome three new members who joined the League in May 2011: Carol Posanza, Kevin Schoneman and Sue Yearwood. We look forward to getting to know you and hope you will become involved in areas of the League that interest you. In May and June the following members renewed their memberships: Carol Barker, Jean Caplan, Clair Craver, Doris Eschenbach, Kathleen Pennock, Ann Robinson, Fred Washington, and Caroll and George Williams. We thank you for continuing to support the League and look forward to seeing you all at our monthly membership meetings.

I also wish to thank Ellen Forwalk, the outgoing Membership Chair, for her dedicated service to our League and for her encouragement, support and friendship in passing the membership torch on to me. I am proud to follow after Ellen and continue the work of the Membership Chair.

My first order of business

is to learn everyone's name. Our first meeting is just around the corner scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, so please save the date and make plans to attend. I look forward to meeting you when you stop by the information table. Vice President Fran Holt, also the Program Chair, and President Karen Wessel are planning an exciting program for us this year and monthly meetings you will not want to miss.

Since our expansion into the Bluffton area last spring, we have already gained some new members. Look for some new faces at our meetings this year. We look forward to more people becoming interested in and joining the League in the months ahead.

My goal for the next year will be to continue to grow the membership and to make the League more visible in the Hilton Head Island and Bluffton communities. I will be looking for community events where the League can have a presence and op-

portunity to interest citizens in the great work that we do and to join us. For starters, I have arranged for the League to have a space at the Bluffton Farmer's Market in old town Bluffton next month on two consecutive Thursdays, September 8 and September 15. On both afternoons, Membership will be teaming up with Voter Services led by Chairman Sue Feutz. We will be doing a combination registering citizens to vote and inviting new people to attend our upcoming meetings and to join the League. Hope you can stop by and see us.

Throughout the year I will be looking for other events where the League can have a presence and opportunity to shine. If you have ideas about events we should consider or would like to become involved in the Membership Committee, please let me know.

I look forward to meeting you. See you in September.

Julie Wittig
Membership Chair

Celebrate Member Appreciation With a Welcome Party Wednesday, September 21, 2011 9:30 a.m.

Come and celebrate with us as we start the new League year with a morning welcome party on Wednesday, September 21 at 9:30 a.m. The festivities will take place at our meeting site, the LowCountry Presbyterian Church Fellowship Hall in Bluffton, and will be held prior to the start of the membership meeting. Refreshments and goodies will be provided.

After the long summer break, get reacquainted with your familiar League friends and make some new friends. Invite a friend to come too. Visitors are always welcome. We look forward to welcoming everyone to our League.

Report on the League of Women Voters of South Carolina Convention

Serving as delegates to the LWVSC Convention held in Sumter May 14-15 was an inspiring and educational experience for my husband Fred and me. We were very impressed by the willingness of our fellow Leaguers to work hard, their dedication to League interests and their competence. A lot of excellent information about the convention is in the summer issue of the *SC Voter* (available in print and on line at www.lwvsc.org). Rather

than repeating everything written there, I will just call your attention to a few items. First, LWVSC now has co-presidents, Barbara Zia and Peggy Brown. Second, the delegates adopted a new two-year education study on the recent and growing trend to evaluate teachers based on results. Third, we decided on the following action priorities: 1. Education 2. Voter Service 3. Tax Reform 4. Criminal Justice

5. Transportation 6. Redistricting (for a short time). Also after much discussion and major amendments, we adopted the following position on illegal drugs: "Illegal drug use should be considered a public health issue, and drug use and drug addiction should be addressed by substance abuse programs and education instead of incarceration."

Fran Holt



ANNUAL MEETING REPORT MAY 11, 2011

Our annual meeting and luncheon was held on the lovely terrace at the Port Royal Plantation Clubhouse on Wednesday, May 11, 2011. Our speaker was County Council Chairman, Weston Newton, Esq.

The business portion of our program included approval of last year's minutes, approval of the budget, approval of the program planning position statements, and approval of a change in the by-laws to reflect our change of name from League of Women Voters Hilton Head Island to League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area (LWVHHI/BA). Sally McGarry, Chair of the Nominating Committee presented the 2011-2012 Board Slate: President: Karen Wessel, Vice President: Fran Holt, Secretary: Caroline McVitty, Fundraising: Donna Russell, Membership: Julie Wittig, and Voters Service: Sue Feutz. The slate was approved unanimously.

Following a fabulous luncheon, Mr. Newton addressed our group. Mr. Newton delivered an impressively straight forward account of some of the issues facing our state and local governments. Of particular note, he spoke of efforts to improve education funding inequities, the process of congressional and local redistricting, and the local questions regarding the airport expansion and dredging of the Sea Pines marina.

Karen Wessel

Voter Service

Our League of Women Voters booth was well received during Rotary Bluffton Festival in May. We had many inquires from out of state past members who have relocated to our area regarding membership in our expanded club. Our optimal booth location, Calhoun and May River Road provided great visibility as festival goers exited shuttle buses. Multiple questions and forms were completed for voter registration, mostly those new to the area. With the gracious help of wandering Rotary Staff and next door Boy Scouts we were able to erect and dismantle our new canopy in record time. Next year we could provide a needed community service by supplying more seats for weary walkers waiting for bus transportation. Good conversation regarding our goals and service were shared with our "resting visitors."

Plans for this fall include candidate debate for the November Bluffton Town Elections, multiple voter registration sites at Libraries, Farmers Markets and Hilton Head High School. Please share other sites that you have found that would generate more registered voters.



FEBRUARY Calendar of Events

Board Meetings

Thursday, September 8, 9:45 at Savannah Bank,
852 Wm. Hilton Parkway

Thursday, October 6, 9:45 at Savannah Bank,
852 Wm. Hilton Parkway .

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

Membership Meeting

September 21 at the **Low Country Presbyterian Church**, 10 Simmonsville Road (corner of Hwy. 278 and Simmonsville Rd.), **Bluffton**

9:30 Member appreciation social time
with refreshments

10: 00 Panel discussion on **Saving Our Rivers and Lands**

Officers and Board 2010—2011

OFFICERS

President:
Karen Wessel 682-3397
Vice-President, Program Chair:
Fran Holt 837-3436
Treasurer:
Janet Law 671-4280
Secretary:
Caroline McVitty 681-6124

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Government Issues/Observer Corps:
Joan Kinne-Shulman 842-9246
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Membership: Julie Wittag 706-3735
Newsletter: Bob McGarry 342-9254
Public Relations/Publicity:
Dee Ann Dowlen 341-2318
Voters Services: Sue Feutz 671-4609