



ANNUAL REPORT from the PRESIDENT

Preparation for our host responsibilities for the LWVSC Convention dominated much of our league activity this year. It began in the summer of 2014 under the leadership of Local Host Chair Pamela Hollinger. Energy and enthusiasm have marked member participation in making this a memorable Convention—Climate for Democracy. We developed the concept of a Destination Convention—to increase participation from all of our Leagues. Several of us attended the January LEAD program and welcomed this as an opportunity to provide some advance information on Convention 2015 plans. As host League we had certain responsibilities with financial implications and so we encouraged Patronage support from our membership with excellent response.

Fall saw us very occupied with candidate forums including State Superintendent of Schools and Town of Hilton Head Island Mayor. We supported a Rural and Critical Lands Referendum which won with 70% of the vote. We continued our work to build relationships with local elected officials with an invitation to the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation. With several changes in our elected representation the 2015-2016 edition of Guide to Elected Officials was printed and distributed. We welcomed Lynn Teague to our Holiday Luncheon for the League lobbyist view of the General Assembly. The film *Pricele\$\$* motivated discussion on money and politics in March. South Carolina's Attorney General spoke at a provocative program on Human Trafficking. We will end the year with an address by local newspaper executive editor on The Fourth Estate: the Role of the Press in a Democracy.

Our League's use of technology continued to expand, increasing our communication with members and the broader community. To accommodate this we instituted a shared communication responsibility—print media and electronic media. While significantly decreasing mailing and printing costs and increasing the frequency of communication the move to electronic communication has required some transition efforts and we continue to explore improvements in our sharing of information.

Finally—a word about membership. We have experienced a phenomenal growth in membership during this two year period. LWVSC recognized our League for a 22% increase in membership 2013-2015. Certainly the efforts of our Membership Directors generated much of that growth. We also believe that the monthly program offerings have drawn considerable interest and new members. Our geographical area has had a considerable influx of new residents, a pool for our recruitment efforts. As our numbers grow we will need to increase efforts to involve the new members that they might value their league membership as do our veteran members.

Loretta Warden, President
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: PROGRAM

Because 2014 was an election year, political topics dominated our fall programs. In September, we sponsored and moderated a forum for the three candidates for SC Superintendent of Education—Ed Murray, Molly Spearman, and Tom Thompson. In October, we led a candidates' forum for the five candidates competing for the position of Mayor of Hilton Head Island to a standing-room only crowd at the Hilton Head Island Town Council Chambers. All five candidates -- David Bennett, Joe DuBois, Cork James, Drew Laughlin, and Rochelle Williams--participated. In November, we hosted three members of our Beaufort County Legislative Delegation at the Bluffton Library. State Senator Tom Davis and Representatives Weston Newton and Jeff Bradley provided us with helpful insights into pending legislation and the workings of our legislative delegation. As a result of this meeting, the League now receives advance agendas for the delegation's meetings.

In 2015, we focused on topics of interest to our local, state and national Leagues. Mike Seymour, President of the Heritage Institute, addressed climate issues in his talk "Climate Change: What's at Stake and What We Can Do about It" in January. In February, our members convened to recommend program initiatives and action priorities for our state League. In March—in collaboration with the Bluffton Library--David Kartunen of WSAV led a lively discussion of the documentary *Pricele\$\$*, which addressed the inordinate influence of money in federal elections. In April, we were privileged to host SC Attorney General Alan Wilson, Solicitor Duffie Stone, and Representative Shannon Erickson, who educated us about the nature and scope of human trafficking around the world and in South Carolina and also updated us on domestic violence legislation reform in our state.

Our annual meeting in May featured Executive Editor of *The Island Packet/Beaufort Gazette* Brian Tolley, whose topic was "The Fourth Estate: The Role of the Press in a Democratic Society."

This past year was a year of growing influence for LWVHHI/BA. Program topics and Bluffton as well as Hilton Head venues resulted in audiences ranging from thirty to over one hundred people. As a result of our expert handling of candidate forums, our League received invitations to moderate several other political forums. Clearly, the League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area has been gaining recognition as a source of unbiased, factual information about candidates and public policy issues affecting our area.

Nancy Williams, Vice President and Program Chair
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: VOTER SERVICES

The first half of 2014-2015 was very busy for the LWVHHI/BA Voter Services Team—all 18 of them, with less activity during the spring. At each event we make available all our written materials, which include the League's GUIDE to LOCAL OFFICIALS for HILTON HEAD ISLAND/BLUFFTON AREA, Website addresses to get answers to questions on various matters, brochures on voting in South Carolina and Voter Registration forms.

A brief discussion of the events scheduled during the fiscal year follows:

Our Voter Services Team set up and manned a booth to register voters at the Bluffton Farmer's Market on Thursdays during the month of September and until the last day to register to vote, which was on October 4. In addition to the residents who filled out voter registration forms, many received answers to their questions about the League and its purpose, how to change their addresses, where to get information on their polling places, and who their elected officials were.

On September 29 we provided instruction in a government class at USCB's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute entitled "*Democracy Is Not A Spectator Sport*". Our president and both co-chairs made the presentation, with the incredible assistance of Janet Law who prepared the computer and graphic support. We discussed voter registration, the voting process, and effective use of the guide. We also discussed how government officials in New Jersey made it possible for everyone who wanted to vote could do so after the storm Sandy hit just weeks before the election. About 30 people attended, who were very involved and provided very positive feedback.

The LWV September meeting at the First Presbyterian Church was a State Superintendent of Schools forum with the three candidates present. There was a robust question and answer period with our moderator, as well as a lively round of questions and ideas voiced by the large audience. As always, there was a registration table, and a number of people made use of it.

There were a total of three Mayoral Forums in October 2015: at Town Hall, Hilton Head Plantation, and Port Royal. Each of the candidates attended at least two of the three forums. The large crowds at each of the three events left with a better understanding of the candidates' positions on the issues currently facing the town of Hilton Head. At all of these forums the League was able to make attendees aware of the Rural and Critical Lands Referendum and the League's support of its passage.

In November, the Team registered students at the HHHS Cap and Gown Day. As they ordered their caps and gowns and received their graduation tassels, about 10 HHHS seniors filled out registration forms, and many more promised to return to a planned drive in the spring of 2016, closer to their 18th birthdays!

With national, state and local elections in 2016, we look forward to an active year ahead. There will be lots to do!

We want to thank the committed members of our team who so generously serve in all our endeavors.

Katie Miller and Oleta Harden, Co-Chairs

Voter Services Committee

League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: MEMBERSHIP

The League of Women Voters Hilton Head/Bluffton area currently has 138 members as of April 30, 2015. Membership Co-Chairs, with significant support from League members have actively recruited and referred potential members. Membership numbers are reviewed by LWVUS on February 1st of each year. Between February 1, 2013 and February 1, 2015, membership increased from 103 to 126 members (22% increase). The Hilton Head Island/Bluffton League was recognized at the biennial LWVSC 2015 Convention, for the second convention in a row, for having the greatest increase in membership in the last two years. Twelve additional individuals have become members since February 1, 2015. The League has welcomed a total of 36 new members between April 30, 2014 and April 30, 2015. Eleven individuals did not renew their membership variety of reasons: relocation, illness, death or other interests. Where appropriate, every effort is made to encourage continued involvement with the League. Some demographic information about this year's membership is provided below:

- 86 individual memberships
- 24 household memberships
- 3 honorary 50 year memberships (one member part of household membership)
- 109 women and 29 men
- 87 members reside in Hilton Head Island, 43 reside in Bluffton, 5 in Beaufort, 1 in Lady's Island, 1 in Callawassie Island and 1 in N. Canton, Ohio
- 2 Hilton Head memberships reactivated

The League has continued to be visible within the Beaufort County area: hosting candidate forums, participating in the Martin Luther King parade on Hilton Head Island, holding numerous voter registration drives, participating in a program with the Hilton Head Library to promote the League. A membership coffee hosted by Membership Co-Chair, Gloria Statham was held May 22, 2014, 6 people joined at that event. Activities are publicized in local newspapers, flyers are placed in public locations, increasing awareness about the League. Membership forms are available at all League events.

Gloria Statham and Sue Yearwood, Membership Co-chairs
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Education Committee got off to a fast start this year in preparing for the League's September forum for the three candidates running for the office of South Carolina Superintendent of Education. Questions were developed to bring out the candidates' positions on a wide range of issues pertinent to South Carolina's schools, including Common Core standards, universal prekindergarten programs, school choice, state funding for education, teacher evaluation, and how to improve underperforming school districts. Some of these same issues were discussed with our legislators at the League's November general meeting with members of the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation. In particular, legislators were asked about their positions on prekindergarten programs for all children, the problem of underperforming schools, and South Carolina's inequitable school funding system.

Throughout the year, Education Committee members have worked to educate themselves about issues at both the state and local level. At the state level, a major focus has been on learning more about how South Carolina's school funding works and identifying opportunities to reform its complicated and controversial funding formulas. State level reform was given a major impetus in November with the South Carolina Supreme Court's ruling that the state has failed in its duty to provide what the state constitution calls a "minimally adequate" education to children in the state's poorest school district. Newly elected SC Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman, supports funding reform and has proposed phasing in increases in the base student cost for all districts in the state as a way to address inequities in funding.

At the local level, the committee has been following the budget process in the Beaufort County School District. Members of the committee have been monitoring the meetings of the Beaufort County School Board and of the County Council of Beaufort and its Finance Committee, where decisions about the school district budget are worked out. A meeting with Phyllis White, Chief Operations Officer of BCSD, helped to clarify the process and gave us an opportunity to discuss the impact of proposed funding reforms on the local district. Locally we are also following state Rep. Bill Herbkersman's bill which seeks to correct problems related to Act 388 with a change in tax structure, monitoring implementation of the new curriculum standards, and investigating the advisability of changing the requirement for collecting signatures for school board candidates.

Kathy Quirk, Chair
Education Committee
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: NATURAL RESOURCES/LAND USE COMMITTEE

Because land use in our area seems to be of paramount importance, we recently established a Natural Resources/Land Use Committee. To date we have had three well attended meetings. We are familiarizing ourselves with League positions (national, state and local) and with pertinent sections of the Beaufort County, Hilton Head Island and Town of Bluffton Comprehensive Plans. We are also trying to decide on what our focus and priorities should be. There seems to be agreement that we should concentrate on local land use issues on which we might make a difference and on making sure that public input and transparency are part of the decision making process.

As a result of discussions at our meetings, our League sent a letter to Beaufort County Council members about the proposal for the County to buy Pepper Hall. We did not voice a position, but we did ask the Council members to consider key questions as they decide how to vote. We want it to be known that the League cares about land use and that we are paying attention to the decision making process. We hope to make a positive difference.

Members of the committee are:

David DesJardins

Sandy Dickson

Teddy Finn

Linda Hennessey

Fran Holt, Chair until 5/13/15

Fred Holt

Joan Kinne-Shulman

Sally McGarry, Chair after 5/13/15

Katie Miller

Dave Rice

Gina Tjersland

Jerry Voight

Loretta Warden

Karen Wessel

Fran Holt, Outgoing Chair

Natural Resources/Land Use Committee

League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: THE LIGHTHOUSE

The newsletter of LWVHHI/BA, *The Lighthouse*, is published monthly from September to May. During recent years, a mid-summer issue has been published in early July. The length of the publication varies from four to eight pages.

As editor, I collect articles from regular and occasional contributors. The articles are reviewed and sent on to Wes Taylor of the Computer Club who for the past three years has provided volunteer assistance to our League. He formats the copy and sends the first draft of each issue to me for checking. President Loretta Warden also reviews each first draft. The final version is passed along to Janet Law, our Communications Tech PR person, to e-mail to members and others who request copies. A few copies are sent by regular mail to those who do not have access to e-mail.

Joan Kinne-Shulman, Editor
The Lighthouse Newsletter
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: OBSERVER CORPS

Observer Corps volunteers attended almost every Hilton Head Island Town Council and Planning Commission meeting during the calendar year. We also attended meetings of special groups, such as the Comprehensive Plan review and revision group.

About six individuals volunteer on a regular basis. They see that I receive documents picked up at the meetings and information about discussions and decisions relevant to issues the League is interested in. I report the information to the Board. During 2014-2015 we did not speak at any of the public meetings.

To date, we have attended Bluffton Town Council and Planning Commission meetings only sporadically. My goal for 2015-2016 is to recruit volunteers to attend these meetings.

When the Beaufort County Councils meets on Hilton Head Island, we make every effort to attend the meeting.

Joan Kinne-Shulman, Chair
Observer Corps
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORTS: COMMUNICATIONS

As Co-chair of LWVHHI/BA Publicity, I took on the responsibility of notifying our local media, including newspapers, magazines, radio, TV stations, and Chamber of Commerce of our upcoming events, providing them with the type of function, date, time, place, guest speaker, etc. In all these so-called 'Press Releases,' I made sure to include our organization's website and a sentence stating that the public was welcome to attend. At most of the events, I took photos of our guest speakers and members which were later shared with the editor of our LWV newsletter for publication in the League's monthly *Lighthouse*. I kept my Publicity Co-chair, League President and V.P. apprised of what I was doing throughout the year.

Sandy Stern, Co-chair for Publicity Communication
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

This past year's electronic public relations effort began last fall with support for an OLLI presentation about Voting given by several members of our Board. The ensuing months have included electronic communication with media and elected officials to support a variety of events and meetings, including candidate forums and the LWVSC state convention. Electronic support includes help with preparation for special event materials and announcements, maintenance of our website LWVHHI.org, e-blasting meeting announcements, e-blasting The Lighthouse newsletter to our members and also to selected media contacts and to all elected officials. The website and our occasional comments on Twitter help to broaden our contacts with the world outside our area, and this year we have nearly doubled our Twitter followers, who are mostly LWV chapters from all over the country, while we in turn follow a number of other chapters.

In many ways every League member is involved in communicating our message as we are visible at official meetings and at voter registration tables and as we distribute our *Guide to Elected Officials* and plant our banners at our meeting sites each month. Thank you for all you've done to help this year's communications effort.

Janet Law, Co-chair for Electronic Communication
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: HOSPITALITY

The League monthly meetings were held at a variety of locations, mainly to accommodate the expected increased attendance for the speakers and topics. In September the Supt of Ed Candidates Forum was held at First Presbyterian Church of HHI and the October HHI Mayoral Candidates Forum took place in the HHI Town Council Chambers. The meetings were from 10:00 – 11:30a.m. on the second Wednesday of the month.

The Bluffton Library was the meeting place for November, March and April, and the Hilton Head Public Service District (PSD) Community Room was used for January and February meetings.

The December holiday luncheon was held at Hampton Lake/Lakeview Room. The speaker was Lynn Teague, LWVSC Vice President. Her topic was "LWVSC Advocacy". The cost was \$26 per person.

A "Winter Blahs" party was held at Sally McGarry's home on Sunday March 8 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

The League Board Meetings were held on the 1st Thursday of the month in the Palmetto Electric Community Room at 10:00a.m. However, the February Board meeting was held in the Bluffton Library Committee Room as the Palmetto Electric Room was not available that day.

The Hospitality Committee made reservations for the PSD Community Room and the Palmetto Electric Community Room four months in advance. The Bluffton Library, First Presbyterian Church and both luncheon venues need at least the same amount of advance notice, if not more.

The Hospitality Committee provided water for the speakers and assisted in the arrangements for each event.

The Annual Meeting and Luncheon will be held on May 13 at the Belfair Clubhouse in The Oaks Dining Room. The meeting will start at 11:45a.m. Our Guest Speaker will be Brian Tolley, who is Executive Editor of Island Packet and Beaufort Gazette. His topic will be "The Fourth Estate: The Role of the Press in a Democratic Society". The cost will be \$25 per person.

Beth Krise, Hospitality Chair
League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

ANNUAL REPORT: TREASURY

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS HHI/BA

07/01/2014 - 03/31/2015

BUDGET TOTALS	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
Income	10,000.00	4,282.00	(5,718.00)
Expenses	10,000.00	6,744.45	3,255.54
Balance (Income minus Expenses)			

INCOME	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
MEMBERSHIP	5,500.00	2,325.00	⚡ (3,175.00)
CONTRIBUTIONS	1,500.00	550.00	⚡ (950.00)
EVENTS	3,000.00	1,407.00	⚡ (1,593.00)
TOTAL	10,000.00	4,132.00	(5,718.00)

Column1	Column2	Column3	Column4
Total Personnel			0.00

OPERATING EXPENSES	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE
EVENTS	3,000.00	1,442.74	1,557.26
FORUMS/PROGRAMS	0.00	352.50	⚡ (352.50)
PMPUS	3,000.00	2,438.00	562.00
PMPSC	1,400.00	1,372.00	28.00
ADMINISTRATION	150.00	0.00	150.00
TRAVEL AND CONVENTIONS	1,300.00	263.00	1,037.00
VOTER SERVICE	100.00	19.02	80.98
WEBSITE	100.00	200.00	⚡ (100.00)
LIGHTHOUSE	100.00	0.00	100.00
ADVERTISING	0.00	350.00	⚡ (350.00)
EDUCATION	100.00	0.00	100.00
MISCELLANEOUS/SOC MEDIA	370.00	288.00	102.00
MEMBERSHIP	380.00	39.20	340.80
Total Operating	10,000.00	6,744.46	3,255.54



WHAT ARE MY TOP 5 HIGHEST OPERATING EXPENSES?

EXPENSE	AMOUNT	% OF EXPENSES	15% REDUCTION
PMPUS	2,438.00	36.1%	365.70
PMPSC	1,372.00	20.3%	205.80
TRAVEL	1,500.00	22.2%	225.00
EVENTS	3,000.00	44.5%	450.00
Total	8,310.00	123.2%	1,246.50

Jan Billingslea, Treasurer
 League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area