



Lighthouse

A PUBLICATION OF THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND/ BLUFFTON AREA

MARCH MEMBERSHIP MEETING
10 a.m., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14
LOWCOUNTRY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
10 SIMMONSVILLE ROAD (AT CORNER OF 278),
BLUFFTON



Mayor Lisa Sulka will report on the State of the Town of Bluffton. Her talk will be followed by a question and answer period. We expect this to be an interesting and informative meeting that will give us the opportunity to learn what has happened since Mayor Sulka gave us an excellent talk a year ago. All members are encouraged to come and to bring guests. The public is invited.

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Report On Special Program Planning Meeting

Our League had a special meeting on February 2 on local and national program planning. The local program planning part resulted in the recommendation to keep our current positions. This recommendation will be presented to the membership for action at the Annual Meeting on May 16. It was agreed that the positions are broad enough to include issues of concern in the Bluffton Area as well as on Hilton Head Island.

Thanks to excellent presentations of current positions and background material by Caroline McVitty, Sally and Bob McGarry, Barbara Swift, Ann Coffin, Kathy Quirk, Donna Russell, Joan Kinne-Shulman, Fred Holt and Janet Law, the national part of the meeting was interesting and productive. After much deliberation and regret that we were limited to making only one recommendation, we selected Meeting Basic Human Needs as the position that should be reviewed and updated. In our explanation to LWVUS, we stated: "...It really seems to be behind the times and may not be reflect the views of today's League members. We think the League needs to reconsider what the role of the federal government should be regarding meeting basic human needs. This is especially true in view of the current state of the economy. We question whether the national government can or should do as much as is suggested by the current position." To see the current position, go to www.lwv.org, search for *Impact on Issues*, go to *More*, then to *on line edition*, and then look under the Social Policy Section for Meeting Basic Human Needs. Final action on the national program will be made at the national convention this summer.

From the President



Our February membership was another great success: we had one of our largest turn-outs gather to watch a screening of "Waiting for Superman". Our Education Chair, Pamela Hollinger led a lively discussion of some of the issues presented in the documentary, particularly school choice, attendance lotteries, teacher effectiveness, and the role of labor unions. Mark your calendars for the next general membership meeting on March 14 when Bluffton Mayor and League member Lisa Sulka will present the *State of the Town* for Bluffton.

On the state level, we continue to monitor legislative efforts to place additional requirements on groups like ours that register voters. Our State Action chair, Sally McGarry and Voters'

Service chair, Sue Feutz, were quoted in last week's article on the legislation in the Island Packet. As a result of the article, the LWVSC has submitted an opinion piece to the Packet which should be published in the near future.

Finally, I would like to thank Fran Holt and her diligent program planning committee for leading us through the planning process on both the local and national level. Also, many thanks to Julie Wittig, Membership Chair, for arranging our trip to The Seabrook, where board members met with six members, former members, and interested individuals to discuss the League and various state and local issues.

Please take a few minutes to read through this Lighthouse where you will



LWVHHI/ BLUFFTON
President
Karen Wessel

find more details on the events I have mentioned and information on upcoming opportunities for you to enjoy your league membership.

Karen Wilber Wessel
President, LWVHHI/BA

Membership

I am delighted to report that we have 4 new members: Linda DeLuca, Pat Goodman, Sandy Stern and Valerie Truesdale. Welcome everyone and thank you for joining the League. We look forward to getting to know you and encourage you to become involved in areas of the League that interest you. If I can point you in the right direction to an area you are interested in, please let me know. Or, listed on the last page of the Lighthouse are the names of the Board members who chair various committees that you can contact. Either way, we welcome your participation.

Our next membership meeting is in Bluffton on March 14 and we hope you all can attend. Please mark your calendars. We'll see you then.

Julie Wittig
Membership Chair

Want to be a leader ?

The Nominating Committee is busy preparing a slate of Officers and Board members to present to the membership at the Annual Meeting in May. If you want to make a suggestion, or if you are interested in being on the Board, please contact a Committee member: Bev Benjamin, Ann Coffin, Katie Miller, Julie Wittig, Ginny Ghirardelli (363-6404)

Waiting for Superman – Heroes, Villains, and the Innocents

In the opening scenes of the documentary film *Waiting for Superman*, Geoffrey Canada, one of the film's "heroes," recalls the day his mother told him that "Superman" did not exist: "She thought I was crying because it's like Santa Claus is not real. I was crying because no one was coming with enough power to save us." At the end of the film he contends that "education is the way out." The way out of what? Poverty? Violence? Poor schools? Declining/dying neighborhoods?

These questions, and many others, were discussed among more than 50 members of the League and numerous guests on Wednesday, February 8. The discussion was facilitated by the League's Education Chair, Pamela Hollinger. She pointed out the movie's

two so-called "heroes"—Canada and Michelle Rhee, who became Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools in 2007, but who lost her position when the incumbent mayor, Adrian Fenty, was defeated. Hollinger also directed the attendees' attention to the need for today's schools to graduate nearly all students to be ready for a four year college. Moreover, they discussed the film's supposed "villains," including parents, teachers, and boards of education, but particularly the system of tenure and teachers' unions.

The primary solution to the problems associated with education presented in the film is charter schools. Consequently, those in attendance focused not only on the gut-wrenching lottery

process by which many charter schools select their students, but also on the inclusiveness of the American public school system which does not have the opportunity to self-select its students as do charter schools. In most cases, charter schools have a student selection process that almost guarantees high quality students, and once students enroll, most charters can expel problem students back to the regular public school. Moreover, parents who generally enroll their children in the lottery are the proactive, involved ones who expect a lot from their children. One in five charter schools are exceptional, with nearly 100% graduation rates, and most students going on to college. However, the research on charter schools suggests that charters are about as

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Visit our web Site

www.lwvhi.org

We Made Headlines!

On February 19, we received an Action Alert from our South Carolina State League regarding H. 4549, the Third Party Voter Registration Bill. We were asked to contact our Legislators and urge them to oppose this bill as "an assault on citizens' constitutional right to vote."

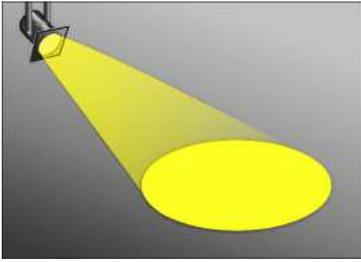
H. 4549 would require anyone registering voters to register with the State Election Commission, account for all registration forms, and deliver them within 48 hours to

election offices or be fined \$50 for each late application. Our League has always conducted our voter registration drives in a responsible manner and turned the forms in to the election office promptly. We feel, therefore, that adding procedural burdens and exposure to fines would be an unwarranted threat to our ability to guarantee all citizens the right to register to vote. We fear that it would discriminate against students, the poor, the elderly and others who might find it difficult to get to a registra-

tion site.

Reporter Tom Barton of The Island Packet had also heard of this bill, scheduled for a vote on February 21, and contacted me for our League's reaction to it. His article headlined "League of Women Voters fights voter-registration bill" was the lead article on page 1 of February 22nd's Packet. To date, H. 4549 has not been voted on.

Sally McGarry
State Action Chair



Spotlight On



Dot Law moved to Hilton Head Island in 1998. She had been visiting the Low Country since the early 70's. Her husband, Lenny was born in Savannah. His family built a beach house on Bradley Beach Road in 1965, where they spent the summers. Lenny and Dot were the first permanent residents to live in the beach house.

Dot, always the community activist, was very aware of the League's participation in community affairs in Indianapolis, long before moving here. However, in 2003, she decided to run for an elected seat,

as a Commissioner of the Public Service District's seven (7) person Board of Commissioners. She represented District (1) for two terms. It was at the public forum, "Meet the Candidates," that Dot Law met many of the women of the League. She realized, she had seen many of them at other public meetings, especially at Town Hall.

Dot Law was invited by her part-time neighbor, Pam Craig of Columbia, SC, to attend the League's Founder's Day reception here on the island. It was there, she discovered Pam was the president of the

League's Columbia, Chapter. At the reception, she realized she knew many of the women in the organization. The League of Women Voters is a group Dot Law has long admired for their civic involvement. The time had come, she joined the League two years ago. She is pleased with her decision.

It's Membership Renewal Time

In March we kick off the 2012-2013 membership drive and will be mailing renewal notices out soon to most of our members. If you recently joined the League you will not be receiving a renewal notice at this time. Last year was an active and exciting year for our membership. We reached the century mark thanks to all of you who spread the word about the League and actively recruited new members. As a result, we have many new friends to welcome and get to know. If you know of anyone who would like to become a member, please let me know (706-3735) and I will be glad to contact them.

We are a strong team as evidenced by the 101 members we have who bring a wealth of skills, knowledge and expertise to the

League. When I attend the membership and board meetings, I continue to be inspired by the smart and talented women and men who care about our communities and want to make a difference. Our membership is our League and we need you all to continue the important work we started in these areas: education and privatization studies, voter registration, judicial diversity, land and water preservation just to name a few. And with 2012 being an election year, you know the League will have a heightened presence in the community helping citizens register to vote before the November 6 election. There is much work to do, fun to be had and room for everyone to participate.

On behalf of the entire

Board, please join me in continuing to support our League by renewing your membership and returning your renewal form with payment by **April 30, 2012**. Stand tall with us and other Leagues throughout SC and the country to safeguard democracy and encourage citizens to play an informed and active role in government. Like the suffragettes that came before us almost a century ago who struggled to win the right to vote and never backed down on their principles, who paved the way for the LWV to carry the torch for democracy, we Leaguers can accomplish great things together and be proud of it.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Julie Wittig
Membership Chair

Where Your Dues and Contributions Go

Sometime last year, a new member asked me how our funds are used. The short answer is that most of what we receive in dues is in turn passed on to the National (LWVUS) and State (LWVSC) organizations of the League of Women Voters. Our dues are currently \$50 for individuals and \$75 for households. For each individual or first member of a household we are billed \$30 by LWVUS and \$14 by LWVSC. Additional members in a household are billed at 50%. There's not much left over, but what makes a difference and helps our local League function as we do is the generosity of members who make contributions over and above their dues obligation.

Although dues and most contributions to our local League are not tax-deductible, the amounts we pay to National and State, which are called Per-Member Payments (PMP) can be offset with tax-deductible contributions and we encourage those because they help the League at all levels. All that is required is that a separate check be written to LWVUS Education Fund. You can send it along with your dues check.

But where does all this money go? Our annual budget can be found in the Lighthouse*, usually in April, and that gives some line-item information, but provides no detail about the PMP amounts.

National and State Leagues use funds in a variety of ways. Obviously there are administrative costs involved in coordinating large organizations and maintaining websites such as LWV.org and LWVSC.org and voter information sites such as VOTE411.org. However, PMP also provides support for League advocacy, studies and publications, all of which have contributed to the credibility of what we do at the local level. (Both LWVUS and LWVSC also rely on contributions in addition to PMP.)

The main functions of LWVUS are to represent the League in its entirety to the federal government, national media, national donors and foundations, and the public at large; to assist and otherwise support state and local Leagues on both internal infrastructure issues and external programs and outreach; and, to support both these core functions

with prudent management and financial oversight, and adequate information technology. LWVSC accomplishes similar tasks on the state level. Locally, we benefit from excellent relationships with the LWVSC Board and the hands-on guidance they provide, not to mention their issues advocacy as shown in local letters to the editor.

Projects of the LWV Education Fund, administered as a 501(c)(3) Education Fund, include pass-through grants to over 100 Leagues in such areas as state-level election reform, a fair judiciary, climate change, hosting of international visitors, etc. This past year our local League benefitted from a grant to present a successful forum concerning judicial diversity in South Carolina.

Please feel free to contact me at 843-671-4280 or to e-mail me at fuss-budgetthi@cs.com with any questions about our treasury, including how to contribute to the Ed Fund.

Janet Law, Treasurer

*Archive copies of the Lighthouse may be found on our website at LWVHHI.org.





Waiting for Superman – Heroes, Villains, and the Innocents

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likely to succeed or fail as public schools.

Hollinger then indicated that the film's greatest shortcoming was its failure to consider the issue of inequality created by the current public school funding scheme. Finally, she concluded the meeting by relating a story and recommending a book. The story is as follows: *Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, (the founders of Ben and Jerry's Ice Cream) addressed a teachers' conference in which Jerry stated that schools were run ineffectively and suggested how they might be fixed. During the Q&A session, a teacher asked: "Do you make the best ice cream in the world?" "Oh yes," Jerry replied, "the very best." "And you use good ingredients?" she countered. "Oh yes," he*

said, "the best ingredients, the creamiest cream, the freshest blueberries, only the best." "So what do you do when you get rotten blueberries?" she questioned. "Oh, we throw them away," he proclaimed. The teacher responded: "That's the difference between our business and yours; we can't throw our blueberries away."

The book Hollinger recommended is [Privatizing Education: Can the School Marketplace Deliver Freedom of Choice, Efficiency, Equity, and Social Cohesion?](#) (2001) Westview Press ISBN-

10: 0813366402 | ISBN-13: 978-0813366401 0. It is a 384-page tome that grew out of a conference that took place at Columbia University's Teachers

College which launched the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education. As such, it is a collection of essays written by authors who examine the efforts of some educators, reformers, investors, and political groups to move education from the public to the private sector via tuition tax credits, voucher initiatives, and for-profit, educational management organizations. It is edited by Henry M. Levin, the William Heard Kilpatrick Professor of Economics and Education at Columbia University Teachers College and the Director of the National Center for the Study of Privatization in Education.

Submitted by: Pamela Hollinger, Education Chair

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY WOMEN

The Hilton Head Island Branch of the AAUW has invited us to attend their meeting at the Seabrook on March 6. Hilton Head Island Town Council member Kim Likins will talk about Town Council issues. This will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about the town as well as to interact with members of AAUW, an organization with which we have a long history of successful partnering.



COMMON CAUSE OF SC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SPEAK TO LEAGUE

John Crangle, Executive Director of Common Cause of SC, has kindly agreed to speak on **Campaign Finance Reform** at our annual meeting/spring luncheon. He was highly recommended for his expertise on this important and timely topic. More details about the meeting and luncheon will be in next month's Lighthouse, but please put 11:30, May 16, Port Royal Golf Club, on your calendar now.

MARCH
Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2011--2012

Board Meetings

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

Thursday, April 5, 9:45 at Savannah Bank,
852 Wm. Hilton Parkway .

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

Membership Meetings

10:00 AM, March 14
State Of The Town Of Bluffton Meeting
Lowcountry Presbyterian Church
corner of Simmonsville Rd. and US278 in Bluffton.
The speaker will be Bluffton Mayor Lisa Sulk a.

OFFICERS

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

BOARD

Fund-raising: vacant
Education: Pamela Hollinger 706-9928
Government Issues/Observer Corps:
Joan Kinne-Shulman 842-9246
Hospitality: Katie Miller 681-6448
Membership: Julie Wittig 706-3735
Newsletter: Bob McGarry 342-9254
Public Relations/Publicity:
Dee Ann Dowlen 341-2318
Voters Services: Sue Feutz 415-6445