



Lighthouse

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

OCTOBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING A CASE FOR DIVERISTY IN SOUTH CAROLINA COURTS

If you have never given much thought to the selection of judges in South Carolina, the October 12th General Meeting may be an eye-opener for you. In the face of an ever-increasing diverse population, our courts still fail to reflect this emerging demographic. This is the case despite increasing diversity within law schools and state bars across the country.

So why are state judiciaries consistently less diverse than the communities they serve?

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

A Case for Diversity in South Carolina Courts.

Wednesday, October 12, 2011 @ 7:00pm

**Hilton Head High School Visual Performing Arts Center (VPAC) –
70 Wilborn Rd.**

Distinguished panel to include SC Senator Tom Davis, SC Representative Andrew “Andy” Patrick, 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.

The SC Supreme Court has approved this program for 1.5 CLE credits.

Anyone needing a ride should call Julie Wittig at 843-706-3735.

Caroline McVitty Judicial Project Coordinator

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League Leaders’ Day, 2011

By Joan Kinne-Shulman

At 7:00 A.M. on August 27, Fran Holt, Joan Kinne-Shulman, Caroline McVitty (our driver), and Julie Wittig headed for Columbia for the annual League Leaders’ Day. LWVSC Co-Presidents Peggy Brown and Barbara Zia chaired a busy day full of information,

helpful advice, and good fellowship.

After coffee and a continental breakfast, we heard a status update of redistricting in South Carolina from an ACLU attorney and Holly Ulbrich, a LWVSC off-board specialist from Clemson.

The next panel focused on “Planning South Carolina’s Transportation Future.” Facilitator Susan Richards, LWVSC VP for Transportation Issues, presented panelists who talked about SCDOT’s administrative problems,

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From the President

It was wonderful to see so many members and guests at our monthly membership meeting “*Saving Our Rivers and Lands*”. You will find a write up by organizer Fran Holt elsewhere in this newsletter. Many thanks to Fran and to Julie Wittig, Kevin Schonehan, and Katie Miller for organizing the Member Appreciation meet and greet prior to the meeting.

Please mark your calendars for our October 12 meeting “*A Case for Diversity in South Carolina Courts*”. Featured speakers include SC Senator Tom Davis, SC Representative Andy Patrick, The Honorable Carmen T. Mullen, Kelly Jolley, Esq., and LWVCS Co-President Barbara Zia. The forum will be held at the Hilton Head High School Visual and Performing Arts Center at 7 p.m. Also note that we

are moderating a forum for Bluffton town council candidates November 2 in Bluffton.

The SC League of Women Voters continues to monitor the voter ID bill, under review by the Department of Justice. It seems likely that the law will end up before the courts, which will delay any enactment until 2012 or later. In other state news, grants for voter registration drives in high schools will be available from January – June and we plan to apply for one of the grants. Members who would like to assist in voter registration efforts should contact Sue Feutz @ sfeutz@roadrunner.com or me at KarenW41352@gmail.com.

On a final note, the Hilton Head Island Town Council Intergovernmental Relations



LWVHHI/ BLUFFTON
President
Karen Wessel

Committee will hold a final hearing on the three redistricting plans in the Racusin Council Chambers at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 28. I will attend and encourage any of you who are interested to join me.

Our next Board Meeting is Thursday, October 6 at 9:45 a.m. at the Savannah Bank on William Hilton Parkway. As always, our meetings are open to all.

Karen Wessel

Don't Feel Left Out.....Join a Committee!

If you care about public education in South Carolina, are interested in voter registration and voter education, wonder what goes on in meetings of the Town Councils, Town Planning Commissions and the Election Commission and would like to help with candidates' forums, then please contact the committee chairs listed below and get involved. You will meet some energetic, knowledgeable and dedicated members who are studying the issues and carrying out the work of the League. Join your fellow League members and be part of the process for change.

Education Committee
Pamela Hollinger, Chair
843-706-9928
pamelahollinger@yahoo.com

Voter Services
Sue Feutz, Chair
843-415-6445
sfeutz@roadrunner.com

**Government Issues/
Observer Corps**
Joan Kinne-Shulman, Chair
843-842-9246
rjshulman@hargray.com

Membership

September was a busy month for Membership. We gained 5 new members: Janice Billingslea, James and Rose Clayton, Elizabeth Fox, and Bluffton Mayor Lisa Sulka. We are delighted that you joined the League and look forward to getting to know you. A special thank you also goes to Nancy Williams for renewing her membership and continuing to support the League. Welcome, everyone!

With a new year of meetings and events just starting, this is the perfect time for all of us to help with membership recruitment. Is there someone you know in your community who stands out in your mind that might be interested in the League? If so, talk to that person about the League and invite them to come with you to our next meeting. Your friends, neighbors, book club, church, golf and tennis activities and other organizations you belong to are excellent sources for finding prospective members. Share with them how you joined the League and what your membership means to you. Many people have

never been invited to join an organization like the League. As you know, the League has been in existence since 1920 and is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations, with local and state affiliates in all 50 states. We value all levels of participation.

If you would like me to mail a flyer and brochure to a nonmember or call someone interested in the League, please email the contact information to me and I will take care of it (wittig4@hargray.com). Please help me to grow the membership. We are currently 90 strong. Let's maximize our strength and grow!

Last month we enhanced our visibility in the Bluffton area by spending two Thursday afternoons at the Bluffton Farmer's Market registering voters and promoting the League. Membership teamed up with Voter Services, led by Chair Sue Feutz, and registered 14 voters, helped 7 others with take-home forms, answered numerous questions about the voter ID law and promoted the September 21 meeting.

On September 15, we recognized Constitution Day and got a great turnout and response from the public that they had seen our article in the newspaper and wanted to come out and register to vote. I wish to thank Dee Ann Dowlen, Publicity Chair, for her efforts to ensure that articles about the events at the Bluffton Farmer's Market were publicized in all the area newspapers. We also thank these members for helping at our booth and making the event a huge success: Karen Wessel, Janet Law, David White, Kathy Quirk, and Anita Holcslaw. The hours passed by quickly due to the support and camaraderie of fellow members. A good time was had by all.

Julie Wittig
Membership



Visit our web Site

www.lwvhi.org



Report On Environmental Issues Meeting

Members and guests at our meeting on September 21 were strongly urged by environmental panelists to get involved now in continuing efforts to protect and renew the unique ecosystem of our area. Panelists included author and former *Island Packet* editor Fran Marscher Bollin, Garrett Budds, Director of Land Protection for the Beaufort County Open Land Trust, and David Harter, Chairman of the Port Royal Sound Foundation (formerly Friends of the Rivers). Mr. Harter, a thirty-year local resident and a sport fisherman, explained that the foundation is expanding to become an educational resource for the area's ecosystem needs, especially the unique estuary systems.

such as Jasper County, because what happens there will affect our area;

- Offering tax incentives to developers and individuals who follow positive environmental recommendations such as using indigenous landscaping and installing pervious driveways.

Beaufort County voters are likely to be asked to support a bond referendum in 2012 to renew the land acquisition program initiated through two previous bond referenda. As a result of those referenda, over 17,000 acres have been preserved by land acquisitions or the purchase or donation of development rights since 2000 .

Beaufort County, the City of Beaufort and the Towns of Hilton Head Island and Bluffton are all developing design programs that take into account ecosystem needs. The City of Beaufort has taken the lead with this. Hilton Head Island could be used for a kind of pilot project on what to do with areas that are already developed.

Ms. Bollin set the tone for the meeting by giving the history of the area and the importance of its natural resources. The real problems have come in recent years, she noted. When she was growing up here, seafood was plentiful and included an abundance of oysters and shrimp. Contamination was a non-issue. She hopes that current and future efforts, including those of the League, will make a much needed difference in our area.

All the panelists urged action on a number of issues to ensure that environmental quality of life remains a core value to local residents. Specific suggestions included:

- Continuing proactive land acquisitions to protect open space and help maintain the ecology of tidal waterways and marshes;
- Considering areas previously developed as possible locations for environmentally friendly renewal;
- Monitoring what happens in neighboring areas



Strong economic arguments support future referenda. Panelists agreed that population growth is likely to continue and that much of the past growth resulted from the attraction to the area's unique environment. As a result, there should be an economic incentive for developers to maintain and enhance the ecosystem. It was also noted that ecosystem services in the Low Country have added many jobs and contributed a substantial amount of money to the economy.

Fred and Fran Holt



League Leaders' Day, 2011

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its poor planning, prioritization, and allocation of funds, and its promotion of new highways that area residents do not want. The panelists represented the Southern Environmental Law Center, the American Public Transportation Assoc., and the SC Department of Transportation.

A highlight of the day (for me, anyway) was the panel of former LWVSC presidents who talked about "Leading the League in South Carolina, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow." Some had gone on to serve on the National Board and start businesses. All were impressive.

As we lined up for the buffet lunch, we heard from a board

member of the Southeastern Institute for Women in Politics. She urged us to promote efforts to get more women to run for public offices in South Carolina.

During lunch, attendees moved about to sit with others interested in particular topics. Joan went to the Voters Service table, which focused on how to carry out successful voter registration efforts in high schools. Julie met with the group discussing how to attract and retain members. Caroline picked up ideas for the judicial diversity project. Fran joined the group discussing education issues.

After lunch we heard from a panel of people involved in promoting recycling. They stressed

the positive effects of recycling: income for businesses, jobs, positive impact on the environment, conservation of energy.

The afternoon highlighted the concerns and activities of local Leagues. State League leaders also offered ideas to help local Leagues train leaders, attract and retain members, develop community-based programs, and become more visible.

We carried away a wealth of ideas that we hope will enhance the effectiveness of our newly expanded League. We also gained an appreciation of the quality and talents of leaders at the state and local levels.



FUTURE MEETINGS

At the November meeting, our membership will be asked to reach consensus on the Role of the Federal Government in Education. The meeting will be at 10:00 on November 9 at the Hilton Head Public Service District Building, 23 Oak Park Drive (off Mathews Dr.), Hilton Head Island. Pamela Hollinger, our Education Committee chair, will lead the discussion. To prepare for the meeting, please do as follows:

Go to www.lwv.org

Go to the **For Members** section

Go to **Projects and Programs**

Go to **Taskforces and Studies**

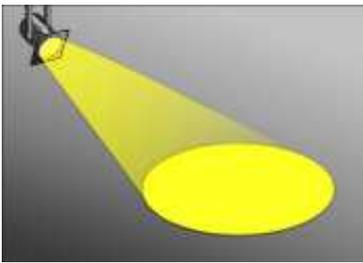
Go to **Public Education Study**

Keep reading until you get to **Consensus Guide** and then read some more until you

Get to the **Questions**.

For information about additional meetings, please refer to the Calendar on our website www.lwvghi.org, and please note that the date of our Annual Meeting/Luncheon has been changed to May 16.

Fran Holt
VP/Program Chair



Spotlight On

Loretta Warden



Shortly after relocating from New England to South Carolina the League of Women Voters (LWV) came into my life. I had never been a member during my years in Massachusetts. With a remarkable group of women I was a charter member of a newly established branch of the American Assn. of University Women (AAUW). In the early '70's that branch was awarded a grant to establish what we called Project Re-entry. Many of you will recall that era when many mid-life women were seeking professional employment and whatever update of skills they might need to re-enter the out of the home work world. That's what Project Re-entry provided for women in the community. For me, it was an almost full time volunteer job and left no time to think about the LWV.

In 1993, upon retiring to South Carolina my most immediate sense was that I had much to learn about my new home—its history, government, politics and needs. SC was not MA and the local LWV, its state and national affiliates became my lifeline to the new information I needed. I have always felt that reliable factual information is the prerequisite for responsible citizen involve-

ment. My LWV membership was my first step in expanding my knowledge base.

Through the years the local branch of the LWV has spawned numerous friendships and has engendered in me great respect for the quality of thought and action of my fellow Leaguers. I joined the Education Committee right away and found it a meaningful way to continue my passion for public education, my professional field. This Committee, together with our total branch membership, played a major role in the development of the SC League's position on Charter Schools. I was pleased to represent the League on the Beaufort School District Oversight Committee monitoring results and expenditures of early referendum funding. I worked with Leaguers on developing a position on a Tax Increment Financing District on Hilton Head Island. I am sure that the support of the League for this initiative was responsible for the Town's participation and the community's support. Revenue from the TIF is still paying for improvements in our Town's TIF districts today.

On the local level, as a member of the Town's

Planning Commission, I am most appreciative of the League's support for the recently completed Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hilton Head Island and the consistent attendance by Leaguers at meetings of local boards, commissions and Town Council. Our continuing efforts to register voters and to provide candidate forums for all voters is the public hallmark of the League.

As a current League member I continue to be proud of the non-partisan actions and positions of this organization on the state level: opposition to the Voter Photo ID Law, support for comprehensive tax reform, advocacy for public education, and protection of natural resources. As I look ahead, my wish list for the LWV includes greater media coverage of its positions so that all voters and elected representatives together might benefit from the results of non-partisan consensus process of the League. .

. Clearly I am grateful that the League of Women Voters came into my life.



OCTOBER
Calendar of Events

Board Meetings

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

Thursday, November 3, 9:45 at Savannah Bank,
852 Wm. Hilton Parkway .

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

Membership Meeting

**A Case for Diversity
in
South Carolina Courts.**

**Wednesday, October 12, 2011 @ 7:00pm
Hilton Head High School Visual Performing
Arts Center (VPAC) –
70 Wilborn Rd.**

Officers and Board 2011—2012

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

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