



# Lighthouse

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

## LWVSC Lobbyist Featured Speaker at December Luncheon

Lynn Teague, LWVSC’s Vice President for Policy and Action, will address our membership at our December 10 holiday luncheon. You won’t want to miss her talk “Change is Coming: the General Assembly in 2015.” Lynn has been hard at work on our behalf providing expert testimony this past fall on issues important to the League—freedom of information and ethics and campaign finance reform. You also won’t want to miss enjoying the holiday spirit with fellow League members at the beautiful Lakeview Room at Hampton Lake in Bluffton. Reservations are due to Beth Krise by December 3—no exceptions. We look forward to seeing new and “old” members alike at 11:30 a.m. on the tenth! Guests are also welcome.

## Legislators Assess 2013-2014 Legislative Session and 2015 Prospects

Senator Tom Davis, Representative Weston Newton and Representative-Elect Jeff Bradley identified highlights and “lowlights” of the past legislative session and their priorities for 2015 at our November 12 meeting at the Bluffton Library.

Senator Davis touted as achievements the legalization of cannabidiol (CBD), a component of marijuana, for medicinal purposes with certain patients and the modification of an 1802 law banning card playing. The revised law now allows the use of cards, dice, and tiles at social gatherings. His major disappointment was the failure to pass ethics reform. He didn’t support proposed legislation that failed to include income disclosures and independent oversight for violations. When questioned privately by Sally McGarry, State Issues and Advocacy Chair, Davis accepted the state League’s proposed “committee” language which would require disclosure of names of donors to leadership political action committees.

Representative Newton was proud of those things the General Assembly didn’t do. It didn’t expand Medicaid, didn’t raise taxes, didn’t allow schools to raise additional funds without a referendum, didn’t restrict Jasper County schools without public input, and—in general—didn’t live outside its means. Among the legislature’s accomplishments Newton cited repeat drunken driver restraints, a state-wide texting ban, expansion of Second Amendment rights (with expanded background checks), additional funding for Waddell Mariculture Center infrastructure, equitable funding for USCB, and in-state tuition for military dependents.

On the negative side of the “ledger” Newton expressed dissatisfaction with the General Assembly’s failure to do anything about ethics reform and freedom of information. He views legislators as public servants, who are not entitled to special exclusions from disclosures. He also said that he had not voted in support of any state budget since his election because of various provisos and amendments that were attached without explanation.

When the new legislative session begins in January, Davis plans to expand the number of drugs permissible for pain management, address the state’s transportation “deficit,” work on real ethics reform, and address healthcare by increasing the number of Medicaid doctors and suppliers (not by accepting federal Medicaid dollars). He will introduce a bill to expand the “scope of practice.”

Newton’s two priorities in 2015 are ethics reform and transportation. He sits on study committees for both issues and chairs the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Sub-committee of the House Ethics Reform Sub-committee. Like Davis, he is committed to an independent investigatory body

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## Message from the President



### Welcome to New Members

Maria & Jordan Berliner

Eleanor Lightsey O'Key

Barbara M. Schacker

*All from Hilton Head Island*

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge all of the efforts of our membership during this past election season. From our first candidate forum in September to our last forum effort in November there was never a shortage of willing and available personnel to do what needed to be done. We had a coordinated and effective effort on the Rural and Critical Lands Referendum. Not only did we provide voter registration opportunities we encouraged the informed participation of all registered voters. I am personally thankful to have had the opportunity to work with a wonderfully responsive group of leaguers—a great team.

Now it is time to turn the page – to legislative actions and results. The very candid comments we heard from members of our Beaufort County Legislative Delegation alerted us to some of the challenges ahead. We look forward to SC League of Women Voters Vice President Lynn Teague's comments at our December gathering on expectations for the 2015 SC General Assembly.

The good news is that our League membership is growing. This will give us the opportunity to expand our study and action efforts on local issues and provide support for the state league agenda. And, as we plan to host the best state convention ever in April 2015 a growing



LWVHHI/Bluffton  
President  
Loretta Warden

and active league will be a great asset.

Looking forward to seeing all of you at the Holiday Luncheon on Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>

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### Please join us

YES, I'd like to become a member of the League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

\$50 One-year INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

\$75 One-year HOUSEHOLD MEMBERSHIP  
for two or more members who share an address

\$25 One-year STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

Name/Names:

Address:

City:

Email:

Telephone (Day/Evening)

Checks should be made payable to the "LWVHHI/BA" and returned with this membership form to:

Sue Yearwood  
26 Bayberry Drive  
Bluffton, SC 29909  
843-705-3918

Membership dues and contributions to the League of Women Voters are generally not deductible as a personal or business expense for tax purposes.

and income disclosure. He also supports the elimination of leadership PACs and the black-out period before elections. He is passionate about FOI. He supports the removal of the legislative exemption, tightening of compliance rules, reduction of some cost barriers, removal of criminal penalties (the bar is set too high), and requiring agendas 24 hours in advance of meetings. He is equally passionate about improving our state-maintained road system, which is the fourth largest in the nation but is supported by the lowest gas tax in the nation. Deferred maintenance has created a transportation deficit of \$42.8 billion. Newton is open to considering an increase in the gas tax to pay for improvements. In another arena of interest, Newton will introduce a bill in January to require that adjacent property owners be notified of a neighbor who is listed on the sex offender registry.



Bradley, the newest member of our legislative delegation, introduced himself to the group and said he is on a learning curve and open to input from fellow legislators and his constituents. Two issues that prompted his running for office are education and the South Carolina Retirement System. He feels that administrative costs (34%) of the state's \$8.7 billion education budget are too high and that there are savings to be found by curtailing these costs. He also feels that the \$416 million fee to manage \$27 billion of assets in the state's retirement system is an area for potential savings. Bradley feels that his financial background will be an asset to the General Assembly.

Audience members posed questions about support for early childhood education and simplification of the education funding system. Newton feels that the state's core mission is K-12 education and that the back end needs to be improved first. He believes competition improves education and supports charter schools, "backpacking," whereby money follows the child, and other approaches utilizing existing dollars. South Carolina is not at the bottom of the states because it fails to spend enough on education according to Newton. He was not optimistic that the funding system would be simplified.

**Visit our Web Site**  
[www.lwvhi.org](http://www.lwvhi.org)

Representative Shannon Erickson of Beaufort, who chairs the Beaufort County Legislative Delegation, was unable to attend due to work she is doing on reforming criminal domestic violence legislation. Senator Davis explained the function of the delegation in her stead. Essentially, the delegation meets on an as-needed basis to receive public comment on any issue and to make appointments to various boards and commissions, such as TCL, Beaufort Jasper Water Authority, South Island PSD, and Coastal Mental Health Center Boards. The delegation doesn't take a collective stance on legislation. Loretta Warden asked that advance notice and agendas of the delegation meetings be sent to the League.

Representative Herbkersman was unable to attend due to a previously scheduled meeting.

Overall, attendees appreciated our elected officials' candor and the opportunity to learn more about the issues facing our state and their positions.

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**BEAUFORT COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**Board of Elections & Registration**  
November 21, 2014

**Bluffton Satellite Office Operating Hours Changed**  
**EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY**

The Beaufort County Board of Elections and Registration Satellite office operating hours has changed. Effective immediately, the Bluffton Office will no longer open five days a week. The office will now only open on **Wednesdays**, except during County scheduled holidays, from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Please note that the days and hours of operation will be adjusted during election periods to meet the needs of the southern residents in Beaufort County.

Full services can be obtained at the Beaufort office at 15 John Galt Rd., Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.  
If you have any questions, please call us at 843-255-6900 or visit our Web



Please join your League of Women Voter friends

for a

**Holiday Luncheon**

**Featuring Lynn Teague, LWVSC Vice President and Lobbyist**

**"Change is Coming: The General Assembly in 2015"**

**Wednesday, December 10**

**At Hampton Lake's Lakeview Room  
202 Hampton Lake Crossing, Bluffton**

**11:30 Social Time      12:00 Luncheon**

**Choice of:**

**Chicken Marsala, with a mushroom demi sauce and mashed potatoes**

**or**

**Tomato Bruschetta Salmon with rice pilaf**

**Fresh vegetables, rolls, cherry pie, iced tea, coffee**

**Cash Bar**

**RSVP by December 3 (no exceptions) by sending a check payable to LWVHHI/BA with this form to**

**Beth Krise, 151 Birdsong Way, Hilton Head Island, SC 29926**

I plan to attend the Dec. 10 Luncheon.....

I will be accompanied by these guests.....

Number of chicken meals @ \$27: .....

Number of salmon meals @ \$27 .....

Amount enclosed: .....

Directions: Take the Bluffton Parkway to the Hampton Lake entrance. Specific directions to the Lakeside Amenity Village will be provided at the gate house (20 Hampton Lake Drive, not the real estate office). Just say you're going to the League of Women Voters luncheon and you'll receive additional directions if you need them. Signs will also be posted at turns on the route.

## VOTERS SERVICES

On November 13, the League's Voters Services Team had a registration table at the Hilton Head High School Cap and Gown Day. Marlene Coe and Katie Miller represented the League. As they ordered their caps and gowns and received their graduation tassels, about **10** HHHS seniors registered, and at least as many more promised to return to a planned drive this spring—closer to their 18<sup>th</sup> birthdays!. We were delighted with the response, and thank Jennifer Weitekamper, the HHHS senior class advisor, for help with the details and promotion for the event.

Voters Services spent a busy couple of months registering voters at the Bluffton Farmers Market on Thursdays in September and assisting at candidates forums supported by the League during October. Shoppers at the Market registered to vote, collected information on the coming election and, in a number of cases, joined the League. (Welcome to those new members, and many thanks to the Market staff for their help and hospitality.)

We are already looking for help in our spring registration drive. Any time you can give will be appreciated, and we will arrange the schedule to meet your needs. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Oleta Harden (843-815-6294) [ojharden@hargray.com](mailto:ojharden@hargray.com) or Katie Miller (843-681-6448) [katiem-llrhh@hargray.com](mailto:katiem-llrhh@hargray.com). It's fun and you will meet lots of new people.

Thanks in advance for your help. We need you!

## What's Happening in Education?

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.

Education Committee members are currently looking at two directions to take as we move forward. At a state level, we are interested in learning more about how South Carolina's school funding works and what opportunities exist to reform its complicated and controversial funding formulas. State level reform was given a major impetus this month 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 districts. This ruling, in a case filed by poor, rural districts in 1993 to seek more equitable funding in an area that came to be known as South Carolina's "Corridor of Shame," is expected to move reform efforts forward. The court has retained jurisdiction of the case and has ordered the parties to reappear before the court within a reasonable amount of time with plans to address this constitutional violation. It would seem that the newly elected SC Superintendent of Education, Molly Spearman, would also support some funding reform. She noted during her campaign that the "state's funding system needs to be simplified, clear and transparent."

In addition to this opportunity for state level advocacy, the committee is also planning to educate itself further about what is happening in our local schools. In a recent town meeting, Superintendent Jeff Moss discussed a number of district initiatives, including choice programs, expanding prekindergarten, new innovation classes in each high school and other career oriented programs. Knowing more about these and other district programs will give us a base to understand local strengths and needs and perhaps provide important background if an issue arises that we want to respond to. Where possible, members of our committee will be observing meetings of the County Council of Beaufort County and its Finance Committee, where decisions about the school district budget are worked out.

Kathy Quirk  
Education Committee Chair





Monthly  
Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2014 - 2015

**BOARD MEETINGS**

Future Board meetings will be held on  
Thursdays, 12/4 at 10:00 A.M. at Bluffton Public Library  
1/8 at 9:45 A.M. at  
Palmetto Electric Meeting Room  
111 Mathews Drive  
Hilton Head Island

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

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**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

Wednesday, December 3—Last day to make reser-  
vations for the December 10 Holiday Luncheon.  
See page 4 for details.

Wednesday, December 10, 11:30 AM  
Holiday Luncheon at Hampton Lake. See Pages 1  
and 4 for details.

**OFFICERS**

President:  
Loretta Warden 681-8450  
Vice-President, Program Chair:  
Nancy Williams 681-4212  
Treasurer:  
Jan Billingslea 815-3743  
Secretary:  
Phylis Giglinto 705-5866

**BOARD**

Action/Advocacy  
Sally McGarry 342-9254  
Communications  
Janet Law 671-4280  
Sandy Stern 342-4834  
Education:  
Kathy Quirk 836-2892  
Government Issues/Observer Corps:  
Joan Kinne-Shulman 842-9246  
Hospitality:  
Elizabeth Krise 681-5783  
Membership:  
Sue Yearwood 705-3918  
Gloria Statham 815-5763  
Newsletter:  
Joan Kinne-Shulman 842-9246  
Voters Services:  
Oleta Harden 815-6294  
Katie Miller 681-8448