



# Lighthouse

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

## Town Managers to Address League in March

The Town of Bluffton Manager Marc Orlando and the Town of Hilton Head Island Manager Steve Riley will be the featured speakers at our March 9 meeting to be held at the Bluffton Public Library at 10:00 a.m.

Each will make a PowerPoint presentation laying out accomplishments and future projects in their respective towns.

Their presentations will be followed by a question and answer period. Guests are welcome.

## Making Democracy Work: Focus of National and Local Program Planning

What are the most pressing issues facing our country and our local communities on which the national League and our local League are uniquely equipped to make an impact? About thirty LWVHHI/BA members convened to tackle these questions at our February 10 program planning meeting. With a presidential election nearing and threats to our democracy looming as the result of the Supreme Court's Citizens United and Voting Rights Act decisions, our League unanimously concurred with the LWVUS's recommendation that Making Democracy Work should be the focus of national activity in 2016-2018.

We agreed that our local League's priorities for action in 2016-2017 should be 1) to help make democracy work by informing and engaging the electorate and by protecting voter and voting rights, and 2) to protect our natural resources. Based on grassroots input received at the meeting, a draft action plan will be presented to the board for its review. A final proposed plan will be submitted to the membership for a vote at the annual meeting in May.

## Voter Service: Need for Poll Workers

Ron Clifford, chairman of the Board of Registration and Elections of Beaufort County, will be the speaker at our annual meeting. In discussing his coming appearance, he expressed the Board's need for poll managers for the coming elections from June, with state and local primaries, through the national election in November. "We are always looking for good candidates to work elections, particularly in the spring and summer months," he assured us.

Before encouraging League participation, as he promises to do in May, Clifford suggested that the League inform interested poll managers of the training all will receive:

- a 1-1/2 hour briefing about 10 days before each election;
- election day work from 6:15 a.m. to help set up the precinct to post-7:00 p.m. when the office is closed at the end of voting;
- \$120 paid to each poll worker for the briefing and voting day.

Work days for the end of 2016 will be

June 14 – State and local primary elections for both parties;

June 28 – State and local primary runoffs as needed;

November 8 – General election.

If you are interested in participating, (or for more information), go to <http://www.bcgov.net/vote> or call (843)255-6900.

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## Message from the President



Nancy Williams, Patricia Montgomery, Sue Yearwood and I all left at the crack of dawn on January 30 to attend a very worthwhile League Education and Advocacy Day (LEAD) program in Columbia. The need for being open to new ways of doing things was a major theme. The first speaker was longtime League member and distinguished attorney Sarah Leverette. She is well into her 90's and so one might not expect her to be a proponent of change, but that is not the case. She believes that our response to change is what will determine our future. The next speaker was Dee Woodward, an African American woman who serves as LWVSC Vice President for Community Relations and past president of the Sumter League. She is very enthusiastic about the League and gave a spirited talk. She made many of us think in a new way by saying there is a perception of the League's being a white woman's organization. She also explained that she thought it was demeaning

when the first League meetings she attended were held in a kitchen rather than a living room.

Other speakers at LEAD included Attorney General Allan Wilson, SC House of Representative (District 75) Krikman Finlay, III and LWVSC Vice President for Issues and Action Lynn Teague. A major point made by the Attorney General was that it is his office's role to determine what the law "is" rather than what it should be. Representative Finlay's remarks included the need for changes in the Senate rules in order to get bills heard there. Lynn Teague talked about the importance of leading the lobbying efforts on just a few issues, such as ethics reform, and working with coalitions on other issues. To keep up with what's happening in Columbia during the legislative session, email Lynn at [Teague\\_L@bellsouth.net](mailto:Teague_L@bellsouth.net) and tell her you want to be on her drop box list. To learn more about what happened at LEAD, please go to [www.lwvsc.org](http://www.lwvsc.org).

I'm proud to say that our League is trying to do some things in new **WAYS**. Nancy Williams moderated an excellent program planning meeting that focused on action plans at both the national and local levels rather than simply reviewing long lists of old positions and concerns. For information about that meeting, see page 1 of this newsletter. Voter service Co-Chairs Oleta Harden and Katie Miller are looking into new venues for voter registration drives, and we are distributing cards that enable anyone with a qr code reader app to register to vote using their smart phones. And now, thanks to Karen Wessel, you can go to League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area on **Facebook** and give us "likes" and comments. By the way, we are also on **Twitter** @LWVHHIBA. Membership CoChairs Diane Neal and Ellie Dixon are using new technology provided by LWVUS to keep membership lists current. The 21st Century is no longer foreign to our League!

Fran Holt

### LWVUS Position Adopted: Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution

- [Constitutional Amendment Study](#)

Following the January 2016 meeting, the League of Women Voters board announced a new position calling for safeguards to govern the constitutional convention process. State Leagues can use this new position, as well as the new position outlining [considerations for evaluating constitutional amendment proposals](#), to address the ongoing debates in many legislatures regarding constitutional conventions, in particular as they related to the Balanced Budget amendment.

Continued on page 4

## Natural Resources/Land Use Committee Report

### Focus on Transportation Continues

The Committee was pleased to host Mr. Craig Forrest at its February 17 meeting and to learn from him why South Carolina's infrastructure woes are not being addressed.

Drawing on his wealth of experience as a Commissioner of the SC Dept. of Transportation from 2010 - 2014 and as Chair of the Transportation Infrastructure Task Force and the Beaufort County Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission during that time, Mr. Forrest told us first that South Carolina is in crisis with regard to transportation. Any driver traveling on I-95, the Main Street of the U.S. East Coast, when crossing the border into South Carolina, immediately notices the poor state of repair of that major highway in our state. 33% of our interstate roads are in no better than fair condition. 833 of our bridges are structurally deficient or obsolete. We must increase our revenue stream, yet according to Mr. Forrest, 50 - 60% of our State Legislators have signed a "no new taxes pledge." As a result, none of the auto-related fees which might help fund road and bridge improvements have been raised in years. With the 10th highest growth rate of the states in the nation, South Carolina must do something.

Mr. Forrest described our State government as a "Legislative State," with the Governor having no power. He feels that both the State Dept. of Transportation and the State Infrastructure Bank must be reformed. Legislators have put these actions at the top of their list for this session, but, to date, they have not acted.

There are 41,000 miles of roads in the SC State highway system -- an unsustainable figure. Some of these roads are so small, they may lead to just one church or one store. Mr. Forrest would reduce the number by half through "devolution" -- turning strictly local roads over to the counties or the municipalities in which they lie. Not only will this take some strain off the state, but it will allow these jurisdictions to set their own numerical standards for local roads and to prioritize their needs. Under such a plan, 30% of a new, "unraidable for other purposes," Highway Trust Fund would be available for the jurisdictions to draw on.

In answer to a question, Mr. Forrest told the Committee the only way to get I-95 improved is to make it a toll road. All in all, our speaker gave us a lot to think about.

Sally McGarry, Chair



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

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### **Report on the Beaufort County Workshop**

As an advocate for "the process of process" in sound decision making, I appreciate the three-day "Leadership and Strategic Planning Workshop" held yearly by the Beaufort County Council. Led by Facilitator Lyle Sumek, this year's retreat took place February 12-14 at the Bluffton Public Library. Debates continue in South Carolina about the scope of "home rule," or the right of powers to self-govern by local governments, in this case by counties. Among those powers are varying authorities for such things as taxation, land use, and schools. [The position of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina regarding Home Rule is available on the web.]

A number of governmental operations fall under the auspices of SC counties. The State has an Association of Counties which provides a weekly view of happenings (see [www.sccounties.org](http://www.sccounties.org)).

Anyone interested in the reasoning behind decisions made throughout the year by the County Council can learn a lot by being an observer at this beginning-of-the-year retreat. The schedules, agendas, and background information are announced through newspaper postings and the county web site ([www.bcgov.net](http://www.bcgov.net)). During these work sessions, issues addressed by each of the Council committees get aired and discussed by the Council as a whole. Then issues are prioritized, the locus of responsibility determined, and a schedule of action recorded, all of which become part of an operational plan for the year.

*Continued on page 4*

**Position on Constitutional Conventions under Article V of the U.S. Constitution Adopted January 2016**



The League is concerned that there are many unresolved questions about the powers and processes of an Article V Constitutional Convention. The League believes such a convention should be called only if the following conditions are in place:

- a) The Constitutional Convention must be transparent and not conducted in secret. The public has a right to know what is being debated and voted on;
- b) Representation at the Constitutional Convention must be based on population rather than one state, one vote, and delegates should be elected rather than appointed. The delegates represent citizens, should be elected by them, and must be distributed by U.S. population;
- c) Voting at the Constitutional Convention must be by delegate, not by state. Delegates from one state can have varying views and should be able to express them by individual votes;
- d) The Constitutional Convention must be limited to a specific topic. It is important to guard against a "runaway convention" which considers multiple issues or topics that were not initiated by the states;
- e) Only state resolutions on a single topic count when determining if a Constitutional Convention should be called. Counting state requests by topic ensures that there is sufficient interest in a particular subject to call a Convention and enhances citizen interest and participation in the process; and
- f) The validity of state calls for an Article V Constitutional Convention must be determined by the most recent action of the state. If a state has enacted a rescission of its call, that rescission must be respected by Congress.

*Please note that our local League had a consensus meeting on this subject in November.*

**Workshop Report - Continued from page 3**

Major grouped concerns this year were economic development, financial decisions and budgets, environmental concerns, and quality of life. Examples of unusual topics explored were:

1. Four municipalities wrote a joint letter to the Council about economic development and leaders presented their recommendations personally.
2. A pleasant occurrence was the smooth acceptance of the financial budget and current status of the schools as on target with preliminary budget agreements. Councilman Dr. Jerry Stewart can be credited with meeting with the School Board to create concurrence with the County financial staff.
3. There is a history of defaults by the State to provide funds to counties as required by law leading to the local perception of unfairness, both in planning and delivery. In addition, there are state mandates which are unfunded. Frustration was expressed about the lack of legislative accountability.
4. Gaining citizen support for funding important costs is a continual concern. There is an ongoing list of needs, such as EMS vehicles and equipment (\$400,000 each), water drainage, care of roads and infrastructure, purchase and preservation of rural and critical lands along with care for animals and wildlife, studies and legalities related to land use and acceptable residential and commercial zoning, and on it goes. Commonplace expenses continue to rise, yet no one wants to increase taxes. However, that move is necessary just to maintain the status quo, let alone responding to the desire for increased services and a growing population. Considerations are a capital sales tax referendum in the fall and a limited millage increase in property taxes. Also to be explored is a change of insurance coverage for employees.

Our County territory is complex and diverse with a Broad River that sometimes becomes a divide and a portion of the County which is a highly desirable tourist and resort destination. I personally continue to be impressed by a competent administration staff headed by County Administrator Gary Kubic. Except for necessary Executive Sessions, meetings of committees and the Council as a whole are open to the public. I recommend visiting any of these sessions as announced on the County web site. You will be welcomed!

Written by LWVHHI/BA member Karen G. Arms

## A Contrast to How We Do Things in South Carolina

The Iowa Democratic Caucus is not without its mystique. It is not an election. It is not overseen by any governmental agency. Rather the Iowa Caucus has its own set of rules established by the Iowa Democratic Party (IDP). To distinguish it from a primary, the caucus occurs over a short period of time, usually about 2 hours (rather than all day) and when possible is held somewhere other than regular polling places.

There is no identification required to attend an Iowa Caucus. Those Democrats already registered to vote in their precinct sign in when they arrive. For all others seeking to participate, they complete a voter registration form and provide their Iowa Driver's License number or the last four digits of their social security number as well as address information.

There are no voting machines. Each precinct Caucus is run by a Precinct Chair, an unpaid volunteer. Each Precinct Chair has their own method of counting the attendees and the number of persons in each preference group supporting a candidate. Once the number of people in each preference group is determined, the totals are used to calculate the number of delegates awarded to each candidate pursuant to a formula provided by the IDP.

The actual number of people preferring each candidate is not made public, only the delegate count is reported.

Some of the volunteers may be inexperienced and make mistakes but there have been few complaints of voter fraud or accusations that the volunteers operating the Caucus lack integrity. Most of the complaints about the 2016 Iowa Democratic Caucus target the very things that distinguish it from an election i.e. inexperienced volunteers and locations that were too small for the number of attendees.

Training of volunteers is available. I attended three training sessions, about 6 hours of training, as well as study materials provided by the IDP which included a 45 page training manual, a 21 page Caucus guide and an 11 page Reporting App Guide. In Johnson County, where we reside, most of the Precinct Chairs attended the training sessions.

I was Precinct Chair in a precinct that anticipated 153 attendees. Actual attendance was 414 plus a number of nonparticipating observers. Over 100 of the attendees at our Precinct Caucus registered to vote at the Caucus.

On Caucus Night, attendees must be in line to attend the Caucus by 7:00 p.m. Shortly after 7:00 p.m. the Precinct Chair announces the number of attendees and the number of people that must be in each preference group for that candidate to be viable. The number of supporters needed for a candidate to be viable varies based on the number of delegates allocated to the precinct by the IDP.

The attendees then have up to 30 minutes to choose their Preference Group. Then the Precinct Chair determines how many people are in each Preference Group, usually with the assistance of a Precinct Captain for each candidate. This can be a challenge similar to herding cats as attendees are free to wander among the preference groups.

After the Precinct Chair has determined how many people are in each preference group, a determination is made if each preference group is viable. Members of nonviable groups can then realign to a viable group. If they do not choose to realign, their group is not awarded any delegates. At our Precinct Caucus, one candidate was not viable and the supporters readily realigned.

A final count of each preference group is then made by the Precinct Chair and announced to the attendees. Then a Caucus Mathematics Worksheet and Reporting Form is used to record the delegates awarded to each viable Preference Group. A representative of each viable Preference Group is required to sign the Caucus Mathematics Worksheet to verify the delegate numbers are accurate. At this point, the Precinct Chair is required to immediately report the delegate results to the IDP. By the end of the night, caucus goers usually have the results of the statewide Caucus.

*Kevin Schoneman wrote this article in response to our request. His partner Julie Wittig and he were active members of our League until, unfortunately for us, they moved to Iowa last year. Please note that the Republican caucus system in Iowa is quite different from the Democratic system .*



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF  
HILTON HEAD ISLAND/  
BLUFFTON AREA**



[www.LWVHHI.org](http://www.LWVHHI.org)

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Monthly  
Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2015 - 2016

**BOARD MEETINGS**

Board meetings are held at 10:00 AM at the Palmetto Electric building on Matthews Drive on HHI, unless otherwise noted.

2016: Mar. 3, Apr. 7, May 5

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**March 9** - Membership Meeting "The States of Bluffton and Hilton Head Island" presented by Town Managers Marc Orlando and Steve Riley, 10:00 AM Bluffton Public Library

**March 12** - Voter Registration at Low Country Coalition Workshop. 1:30 - 4:00 PM Bluffton Public Library

**March 16** - Natural Resources/Land use Committee meeting 2:00 PM Coastal States Bank, 98 Main Street (off circle leading to Hilton Head Plantation).

**April 6** - Membership Meeting, "Career Readiness for Beaufort and Jasper County Students: 2017 and Beyond" 7:00 PM New River Palmetto Electric Community Room.

**May 11** - Annual Meeting and Luncheon, Colleton River Plantation Clubhouse. 11:15 AM Social Hour, 11:45 AM Annual Meeting, followed by lunch and the speaker, Ron Clifford, Chairman of the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County.

**OFFICERS**

President:  
Fran Holt 843-837-3436  
Vice-President, Program Chair:  
Nancy Williams 843-681-4212  
Treasurer:  
Jan Billingslea 843-815-3743  
Secretary:  
Ellen Dahl 843-785-2115

**BOARD**

Communications:  
Sandy Stern 843-342-4834  
Education:  
Kathy Quirk 843-836-2892  
Membership:  
Ellie Dixon 843-705-3973  
Diane Neal 843-757-0622  
Natural Resources/Land Use:  
Sally McGarry 843-342-9254  
Newsletter:  
Joan Kinne-Shulman 843-842-9246  
State Issues/Advocacy:  
Patricia Montgomery 843-707-1036  
Voters Services:  
Oleta Harden 843-815-6294  
Katie Miller 843-681-6448

**Off-Board Positions**

Healthcare: Alison Burke  
Hospitality: Mary Jo Happle  
Observer Corps: Joan Kinne-Shulman  
Webmaster: David Rice  
Archivist: Connie Voight  
Nominating Committee  
Chair: Loretta Warden