

Lighthouse

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

May 11 Annual Meeting and Luncheon

League members will gather on May 11 at the Nicklaus Clubhouse in Colleton River Plantation for our annual meeting when we will elect officers and approve a program plan and budget for 2016-2017.

Our featured speaker will be Ron Clifford, Chairman of the Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County. Appointed by the Governor in 2005 and elected to a second term in 2015, Mr. Clifford has served as Chairman since 2010.

Mr. Clifford will discuss efforts to improve the South Carolina election system. His appearance is timely given the number of elections in 2016 for local, state, and national offices and our League's interest in facilitating voter access and increasing voter turnout.

Members are asked to arrive at 11:15 a.m. for social time. A cash bar will be available.

The meeting will begin at 11:45 a.m. with lunch to follow at 12:15 p.m.

Please RSVP by May 4 using the reservation form which appears on page 3 in this newsletter.

Inside This Issue

May 11 Annual Meeting and Luncheon	1
Review of April 13 meeting on Education Issues	1
Message from President	2
Elections—May 3 Special Election for HHI Town Council Ward 3	2
LWVHHI/BA on Facebook	2
Annual Meeting and Luncheon Invitation	3
Review of April 13 meeting continued	4
Photo of Speaker and Education Committee	5
Elections—continued State-wide Primaries	5
Land Use/Natural Resources Committee	6
Mark Your Calendar	7
Officers and Board	7

Review of the April 13 Meeting on Education Issues

Jane Pulling, LWVSC Education Chair, shared her perspective on recent legislative action impacting education and on the new Collaborative Agenda for PreK-12 Public Education with League members and guests at our April 13 meeting. Jane preceded her review of current legislation with a discussion of the Collaborative Agenda which has been developed by seven statewide organizations, including LWVSC, to guide and help determine legislative priorities and initiatives for PreK-12 public education. This agenda was developed in response to legislators asking these organizations to be as focused as possible in their priorities so that they could respond to simple, clear directives from advocates for education.

The Collaborative Agenda for PreK-12 Education, which Jane sees as a significant achievement in coordinating advocacy, provides a framework for building a smart, comprehensive public education system through effective policy and is built around support for five key positions:

- A comprehensive early childhood system including universal 4K, parent support programs, early identification of at-risk students, and wrap-around services to at-risk children ages 0-3.
- School choice within the public school system, through public charter schools, magnet schools, and other public school choice options. (This position includes opposition to any use of public funds that has the effect of taking taxpayers money to support private, religious or homeschooling.)

Continued on page 4.

Message from the President



Each Sunday at my church, the priest says “You are always welcome at this church whether you have a faith or are seeking one.” I think the same is true about the League. Everyone is welcome whether they are very involved in what we do, barely involved or not even a member or potential member. Just being interested in the League enough to come to a meeting, read our newsletter, support one of our positions, pay dues or make a contribution is sufficient. Of course, we’d like everyone to be involved a lot, and thank goodness we have some members who have the time and desire to do the work that keeps the organization going and makes it productive. Two such members are about to go off our board. They are Nancy Williams and Katie Miller.

For the past two years Nancy Williams has been an outstanding Vice President/ Program Chair. In addition, she has been a great help to me as I am sure she was to my predecessor, Loretta Warden. She is supportive, gives excellent advice when asked and is willing to do whatever needs to be done. The good news is that Nancy will still be very involved in the League even though she will no longer be on the board. She has agreed to take on the job of *Lighthouse* editor. Knowing a lot about the League and the community and having once been an English teacher are great credentials for this important job. I know she will be an excellent editor.

Katie Miller will also be leaving the board. She first served as a very capable Hospitality Chair and then as an excellent Voter Service CoChair. She has also been responsible for putting together and editing the *Guide to Elected Officials for Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area* and has served on the Natural Resources/Land Use Committee and the Nominating Committee. We hope she will continue to be involved in the League. She should not be surprised if we call on her for help from time to time.

Our other board members are expected to continue to serve, although in some cases it will be in a new position. At the Annual Meeting, it will be my pleasure to express my thanks to them as well as to Nancy, Katie and everyone else who has helped me during the past year. We have had a great team!

Fran Holt

ELECTIONS

MAY 3, 2016 SPECIAL ELECTION for HILTON HEAD ISLAND TOWN COUNCIL WARD 3

Any resident of Hilton Head Island’s Ward 3, who registered to vote by April 3, can vote in the special election to fill the seat being vacated by Councilman Lee Edwards. The candidates are David Ames, Ryan McAvoy, Brendan Reilley and Palmer Simmons. To help voters choose their preferred candidate, the League conducted a candidate forum on April 28. The last day to vote inperson/absentee is May 2.

For more on upcoming elections please go to page 5.

NOTE - You can follow LWVHHI/BA on Facebook.

Please join your
League of Women Voter Friends
For our Annual Meeting and Luncheon
Featuring

Ron Clifford, Chairman
Board of Voter Registration and Elections of Beaufort County
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
Colleton River Plantation, Nicklaus Clubhouse
Social Time:: 11:15 Meeting: 11:45 Lunch: 12:15



MENU CHOICES

SEARED BONELESS CHICKEN GRECQUE
Sun-dried Tomatoes, Herbs, Olives, Feta, Arugula and Seasonal Vegetables

CORIANDER DUSTED SALMON
Ratatouille, Tomato-Fennel Broth

LOWCOUNTRY COBB SALAD
Crisp Greens, Garden Vegetables, Grilled Chicken, Egg, Avocado, Bacon,
Blue Cheese, and Apple Cider Vinaigrette

*WITHOUT CHICKEN AND BACON FOR VEGETARIAN ENTRÉE

Tiramisu
Iced and hot tea, coffee
Cash Bar

RSVP by sending a check for \$30.00** payable to LWVHHI/BA
and this form by May 4, 2016 to
Mary Jo Happley
3 Pine Sky Court
Hilton Head Island, SC 29926
A PASS WILL BE WAITING FOR YOU AT THE GATE

I plan to attend the May 11, luncheon _____

I will be accompanied by these guests _____

Number of Meals 30.00 _____

Number of Vegetarian Meals* _____

**Meal charge includes luncheon, and a minimal amount
to help defray expenses for 2015-2016

Visit our Web Site
www.lwvghi.org

Review of the April 13 Meeting - continued from page 1



- The recruitment and retention of high quality teachers through a beginning teacher salary of \$40,000 and efforts to maintain competitive teacher compensation.
- A fair and comprehensive system of educator evaluation which includes qualitative rating categories and multiple data points, has educator participation in its development and implementation, provides feedback to help educators develop skills, and is fully funded statewide.
- A comprehensive approach to tax reform by the General Assembly which corrects funding inequities created by differences in school districts' revenue generating capabilities and stable, adequate educational funding for all public schools.

Jane was very positive about the development of this collaborative agenda for South Carolina but less positive about current legislative action in the Statehouse. At the time of her presentation, the House had passed a number of bills but action was moving at a "glacial pace" in the Senate. Bills which had passed in the House included:

- An increase in the Base Student Cost which the House set at \$2,350 (with flexibility for special needs/poverty), an increase of \$250 from last year.
- H3041 which seeks voter approval to amend the state constitution to allow the governor to appoint the State Superintendent of Education. (Opposed by LWVSC)
- H4537 (Private School Tax Credits) which allocates funds to provide tax credits to individuals who donate to scholarship-granting organizations that provide tuition scholarships for exceptional needs students to attend private schools. (Opposed by LWVSC)
- Proviso 1A.64 (Rural Teacher Recruiting Initiative) which would create a program to recruit and retain teachers to rural and underserved school districts with salary and education subsidy (ex. student loan forgiveness) incentives.

The House response to the Abbeville case has been, according to Jane, peripheral to the larger issues facing the poor, rural districts who filed the case and provided few of the remedies mandated by the SC Supreme Court decision. The House Education and Policy Reform Task Force, chaired by Rep. Rita Allison, provided a broad and useful set of recommendations in their report dated December 2015. This committee was empowered to make recommendations but legislation from the Statehouse is needed for implementation. At this point, there have been positive steps in increasing the poverty weighting in funding, increasing bus driver salaries, making available smaller buses with technology for the long rural routes, and incentivizing the consolidation of smaller districts. However, much remains to be done in bringing the Task Force recommendations into legislative reality and providing substantive solutions to the challenges faced by the Abbeville districts. There have been a number of bills proposed to study the problem, ex. studying what incentives might draw teacher graduates to rural districts, but few bills which provide solutions like a School Improvement/Infrastructure Bank to help poor districts move forward with needed capital improvements or targeted increases in teacher salaries in districts with underserved populations.

Submitted by Kathy Quirk



Speaker and members of the LWVHHI/BA Education Committee at the April 13 meeting. From left, Karen Arms, Fran Holt, Kathy Quirk (Chair), Speaker Jane Pulling (LWVSC Education Chair), Loretta Warden, Trish Montgomery, and Carol Baker.

ELECTIONS—Continued from page 2

STATEWIDE PRIMARY ON JUNE 14, 2016

There will be a statewide primary on June 14. Because we don't register by party in South Carolina, anyone who has registered by May 14 can choose to vote for the candidates on either party's ballot. However, voters cannot vote on both a Republican and Democratic ballot.

In our area, voters deciding to vote on June 14 on the Republican ballot will be able to select their preferred candidate for U.S. House of Representatives, District 1. The candidates are Mark Sanford (incumbent) and Jenny Horne. For 14th Circuit Solicitor, they can select "Duffie" Stone (incumbent) or Angela McCall Tanner. If they live in Beaufort County Council District 7, they can select either Cynthia Bensch (incumbent) or Mike Covert.

Voters who live in SC House District 122 can choose to vote on the Democratic ballot and select Bill Bowers (incumbent), Curtis Brantley, John Pol or Sheldron Williams.

The Greater Bluffton Republican Club is sponsoring a candidate forum for the 14th Circuit Solicitor's race on May 4 at 5:30 and for the Beaufort County Council District 7 race at 5:45 on May 11. Both forums will be at Rose Hill Golf Club, 4 Clubhouse Drive, Bluffton.

Please note that the last day to vote inperson/absentee is June 13.

Land Use/ Natural Resources Committee



At the Committee's meeting on Wed., April 20, we were joined by Kate Schaefer, Director of the Beaufort Office of the SC Coastal Conservation League. She made a power point presentation of the current state of transportation legislation. As we learned last month, this year's Roads Bill made the Infrastructure Bank answerable to the Dept. of Transportation. Each entity operates with a separate pot of money and they prioritize projects separately. Senator Tom Davis and Representative Weston Newton are pushing for reform in the way DOT does its prioritizing and for better governance there. The Coastal Conservation League is working to reform the Infra-structure Bank. A conference committee will meet to agree on a final version of the Roads Bill.

Other topics Ms. Schaefer covered were the idea of turning State roads over to local governments, the possibility of increasing the vehicle tax (but not the gas tax) to provide more revenue for roads and bridges, and how to manage tree clearing on highway I-95 to reduce accidents. We also observed that, although our coastal areas have been spared oil and gas drilling by the Obama administration, seismic testing to evaluate oil and gas resources was not outlawed. Several permit requests are pending and Governor Haley supports seismic testing, done with powerful air guns that threaten fish, whale, and dolphin populations. We will have to work now to convince the Dept. of the Interior that seismic testing makes no sense when drilling is not allowed.

The next committee will be Wed., May 18, at 2:00 p.m. at Coastal States Bank on Main Street.

Sally McGarry

