

# Lighthouse

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



## Tom Davis to Address League at December Holiday Luncheon

SC Senator Tom Davis will be the featured speaker at the League’s annual holiday luncheon on December 14 at Colleton River Club. Davis will preview the 2017 legislative session.

Networking will begin at 11:30 AM. Lunch will be served at 12 noon. A cash bar will be available.

Attendees will have a choice of chicken, salmon, or a vegetarian Cobb salad for lunch at the price of \$30 per meal. Reservations and checks should be sent to Jan Billingslea, 5 Lansmere Place, Bluffton, SC 29910 by December 5. Checks should be payable to LWVHHI/BA. Please indicate your choice of entrées and the number and names of any guests.

## November Consensus Meeting on Healthcare

A sleepy group of League members gathered at the Bluffton Library on November 9, the morning after the presidential election, to consider questions aimed at arriving at a consensus on a League of Women Voters of South Carolina policy on healthcare.

A panel consisting of local members provided background information on a range of healthcare topics. Alison Burke reviewed the scope of health insurance coverage in our state, noting that in 2015 194,000 South Carolinians were uninsured and that four hospitals in rural areas had closed, due in part to a lack of Medicaid funding. Cindy Hudson discussed lifestyle health issues of obesity and tobacco. Sue Feutz discussed reproductive health in the context of sexual and reproductive rights.

After these presentations, those assembled engaged in spirited discussion and arrived at consensus on 1) whether health insurance coverage should be expanded for uninsured South Carolinians; 2) whether our state should take responsibility for providing at least basic health care to its citizens and how; 3) whether the League should support policies to address food deserts, nutritional education and physical activity and discourage the use of tobacco products; and 4) how important it is for the League to reaffirm its commitment to reproductive rights, including family planning, access to abortion, and sex education.

Our League’s consensus and comments will be forwarded to LWVSC, which will develop a healthcare policy reflecting the consensus of all our state’s Leagues.

## A Note to Members Regarding Dues and Lists

Our membership co-chairs, Diane Neal and Ellie Dixon, have been busy updating our national roster. It’s an important job. We pay LWVUS and LWVSC substantial per member payments (PMP) based on what’s on that roster. That means we need to take people off the list if they have not paid their dues, or we will be paying too much.

When the national roster list is completely updated, we will also update our mailing list. If, per chance, you don’t receive a *Lighthouse* in January, it will be due to our records indicating that your membership has expired. To get reinstated, please call or email. President Fran Holt at 843-837-3436 or at [franholthhbl@gmail.com](mailto:franholthhbl@gmail.com).

We’d be delighted to have you back as a member.

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## Message from the President



**Making  
Democracy  
Work**

Although most of us will probably remember 2016 as the year of Hurricane Matthew and the surprise election of Donald J. Trump, our League's activities obviously did not center on those events. We focused on voter service and issues. We also took time to enjoy some social occasions, culminating in the recent very successful and entertaining Jazz Brunch fundraiser. Jan Billingslea and her committee deserve a big thank you for arranging that event.



A key activity this year has been to provide voter service under the leadership of Katie Miller, Ruth Wilwerding and Oleta Harden. We personally registered about 100 people this fall and quite a lot of others earlier in the year. We also provided information (including how to vote online) to many others which we believe resulted in many more registrations. In addition, we worked hard to inform voters about candidates, absentee voting, sample ballots and the referenda through forums, meetings, our website, letters to the editor, advertisements, Facebook and occasionally Twitter.

Two significant studies, one national and one state, resulted in consensus meetings in order to develop positions on which League advocacy will be based. The first was a national study on Money in Politics. Thanks to presentations made by committee members Caroline McVitty, Mary Ann Bromley, Alice Gianni and Nancy Williams and careful listening by recorder Janet Law, we reached consensus that helped LWVUS form a strong position. The state study was on healthcare. Our meeting on that was led by Alison Burke, Cindy Hudson and Sue Feutz. Nancy Williams served as recorder. See the article on page 1 for more details on the meeting.

In addition to meetings led by our own members, we've been fortunate to have had some excellent speakers talk on a variety of subjects. They included:

- Hilton Head Island Town Manager Steve Riley and Bluffton Deputy Town Manager Scott Marshall
- Jane Pulling, LWVSC Education Chair
- Ron Clifford, Chairman of the Beaufort County Board of Voter Registration and Elections
- Michael Sinkler of the SC Conservation League and David Bishop of The National Conservancy
- Phyllis White, Chief Operational Officer for the Beaufort County School District and Mike Sutton, Chairman of the Beaufort County Capital Projects Sales Tax Commission

Local committee work has been important too this year. Kathy Quirk has led our Education Committee. Sally McGarry led our Natural Resources/Land Use Committee and the Observer Corps.

Our League also joined LWVSC in advocating for ethics reform, gun safety and the prevention of offshore drilling. As participants in the national League convention, we took part in decisions to loosen membership requirements and pass resolutions on gun control, D.C. statehood and climate control. The convention also agreed to expand our national position on healthcare to include mental health and to focus on Making Democracy Work for the next two years.

I hope to see you at what will surely be a festive and informative holiday luncheon.

Happy holidays!

Fran Holt

## First Membership Meeting in 2017

We'll start off the New Year with a challenge. Members, guests, and the general public are invited to take part in our first meeting. It will be held on Wednesday, January 11, at 2:00 PM (note the change from our usual meeting time) in the Campbell Chapel AME Church at 25 Boundary Street in Bluffton. The title is "Creating the Beloved Community: A Conversation on Race Relations."

Dr. Jon R. Black, the senior pastor of the Campbell Chapel AME Church, will give a welcoming message. A panel of four or five speakers will provide background notes and then open up the discussion for audience participation.

We hope that the "Conversation" will be the beginning of an ongoing series of programs. Please come and join in.



**Making  
Democracy  
Work**

## Land Use/Natural Resources Committee

At the Committee's November 16 meeting, Kate Schaefer of the Coastal Conservation League (CCL) was invited to talk to us about trees and tree ordinances. This seemed appropriate following the devastation wreaked on our trees by Hurricane Matthew.

The position of the CCL is that county and municipality tree ordinances should be consistent with each other and that wildlife habitat and habitat connectivity should be considered. Also, development along highways and waterways needs special attention. Kate feels that, in using fines vs. incentives to achieve good practices, Hilton Head Island does a good job of using incentives, i.e. density bonuses. However, Hurricane Matthew showed that the island needs to look to managing its trees. Revision of the County Tree Ordinance is tabled for now, probably until January, but it needs to be finalized as quickly as possible.

Other topics discussed included development of Bay Point Island (the Coastal Conservation League will fight it), the study of a possible plastic bag ban on Hilton Head Island, and the start of the Environmental Impact Statement process for the proposed Jasper Port coming up in January.

The Committee will not meet in December. Look for the January meeting date next month.

## Public Hearing on Electricity Rate Increases

A SC House Select Committee will hold an all-day public hearing to accept public comment on energy financing by private utilities. Most South Carolinians should take a very personal interest in this meeting because the law in question significantly affects the size of the check that must be written every month to pay utility bills. The public hearing will be held Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, starting at 10:30 AM in room 403 of the Blatt Building on the State House campus.

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina is part of the Stop the Blank Check Coalition looking to control costs of financing new energy plants by amending the Base Load Review Act, which was passed in 2006 to enable utility companies to build major energy generation facilities while saving financing costs. Several amendments are being suggested that would put more burden on a utility to show that construction management decisions are prudent, construction contracts are better vetted, profit to the utility is properly regulated, and most importantly, the financing of construction cost overruns is the responsibility of the utility until the project is completed.

JoAnne Day, Co-President of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina, has said that "The League of Women Voters of South Carolina appreciates the interest that members of the House are showing in the issues around utility rates and the Base Load Review Act. We look forward to working with them to insure that the legal framework is sufficient to ensure that the interests of utilities and ratepayers are balanced fairly and responsibly."

**Visit our Web Site**

**[www.lwvghi.org](http://www.lwvghi.org)**

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BLUFFTON AREA



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Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2016- 2017

**BOARD MEETINGS**

Board meetings are held monthly at 10:00 AM at Palmetto Electric Cooperative on Mathews Drive on Hilton Head Island, unless otherwise noted.

All members are welcome at Board meetings.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

**December 8**—Board Meeting, Palmetto Electric, 2 PM

**December 14**—Holiday Luncheon at Colleton River Club, SC Senator Tom Davis, Speaker, 11:30 AM

**January 11**—Creating the Beloved Community: A Conversation on Race Relations, Campbell Chapel AME Church, Bluffton, 2 PM. Open to the public.

**OFFICERS**

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Voter Service:  
Ruth Wilwerding 843-671-5562

**Off-Board Positions**

Archivist:	Connie Voight
Facebook	Karen Wessel
Healthcare:	Alison Burke
Natural Resources/Land Use	Sally McGarry
Newsletter/Nominating	Nancy Williams
Webmaster:	David Rice



League members and guests gathered at Ruby Lee's South for a jazz brunch and fundraiser for LWVHHI/BA last month.