



Lighthouse

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

Coming November 18: Democracy for Sale?

In the wake of the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision that opened the door to unlimited political spending by corporations and unions, the League of Women Voters of the United States is undertaking two national studies addressing the influence of money in politics.

The first study—the possibility of an amendment to the United States Constitution to reverse the decision—will be the subject of our November 18 meeting entitled “Democracy for Sale?” After an opening LWVUS PowerPoint presentation, we will discuss guidelines for evaluating Constitutional amendment proposals and the process of amending the Constitution by congressional action or an Article V. Constitutional Convention. Several of our members will share their research as part of a moderated discussion, which will lead to our League’s arriving at consensus on fourteen questions. To preview the questions, please go to <http://forum.lwv.org/member-resources/article/constitutional-amendment-study-guide>. More information will be sent to members by November 11.

We will meet at the Bluffton Library at 10:00 a.m. on November 18. Non-League members are welcome to attend but may not participate in the discussion.

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Save the Date: December 9

LWVUS President Elisabeth MacNamara has accepted our invitation to be the guest speaker at our December 9 holiday luncheon, which will kick off our 30th anniversary year. The invitation and RSVP form appear elsewhere in this newsletter. So gather up your friends and plan now to attend this special event at the Country Club of Hilton Head.

Highlights of October Meeting: The State of Beaufort County

On October 14, County Council Chairman Paul Sommerville shared his assessment of the state of our county by discussing a wide range of issues, including water quality, roads, the county’s operating and capital budgets, debt, and economic development.

Water quality is a quality of life issue for the Lowcountry. Since the 1920’s and 30’s, exogenous species, sewage, and development have done damage to our county’s water supply that the Council is trying to correct. Major efforts have included the creation of a storm water treatment department, the imposing of municipal and county storm water fees, and various retrofitting projects under the jurisdiction of a federal program applying to populations over 150,000.

Roads are another area of concern. According to Sommerville, we’ve been “behind the curve” as our roads become more and more congested. Beaufort County has 535 miles of state roads, most serving small neighborhoods, that the state is challenged to maintain. As a result, Beaufort County has spent about a half billion dollars on state projects (e.g. widening of Routes 278 and 170; the Broad River Bridge). So essentially, we’re maintaining state roads, with some state contribution. The county is likely to need to

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Message from the President



Recently I was asked if being a Democrat was a requirement for being a member of the League!

I think the question was not *totally* serious, but it worries me that some people may really feel that all Leaguers are indeed Democrats. In fact, we have members who are Republicans, Democrats and Independents, and we encourage diversity of all kinds. Although all members most likely believe in the importance of voting, of being informed when voting and in the value of studying issues in order to take positions that enable the League to advocate for change, there are many things on which we do not all agree.

In my experience, membership in a party and support of a particular candidate are subjects that are not discussed at League gatherings

or even among Leaguers when together in other situations. This results in our being able to have credibility when we sponsor a candidates forum or talk to a legislator about an issue that is of concern to us.

An example of a successful forum sponsored by our League was the one for candidates for Mayor and Town Council in Bluffton on October 7. Sally McGarry, former League President and current Natural Resources/Land Use Committee Chairman, did a masterful job of moderating. It wasn't easy, because there were two candidates for Mayor and eight candidates for Town Council. As *The Island Packet* reporter Lucas High said, the very well attended forum was "spirited but cordial." In addition to Sally, Leaguers Jan Billingslea, Oleta Harden,

Joan KinneShulman, Katie Miller, Diane Neal, Kathy Quirk, Loretta Warden, and Nancy Williams as well as Sandra Lunceford of the Town of Bluffton staff and the ten candidates deserve many thanks for the success of the forum.

Despite the League's non-partisan policy, there are no restrictions on most members to become involved in party politics as long as they understand that they cannot speak for the League. The only restrictions are on board members, especially the president and voter services chairman. To see our non-partisan policy, which was updated at our October board meeting, please go to our website, www.lwvghi.org.

Fran Holt

A Special Hello to Our New Members

With our season's programs well under way, we extend a warm welcome to new members who have joined our area League of Women Voters during the past year. Among our most recent new members are Carol Willey from Sun City, Ruth Wilwerding of Hilton Head, Jean Ellen Goode of Bluffton, Elaine Cope of Bluffton and Karen Golden of Bluffton. Welcome all.

In addition to attending our timely and informative monthly programs, we hope you will tell us of your particular interests and become involved with some of our LWV Hilton Head/Bluffton chapter activities.

As you know, by joining the LWV, you have become affiliated with a national organization that has a long history of providing current and informative programs that help us to become responsible citizens. Our local LWV Chapter also puts a strong emphasis on informative programs about elections and local, state and county issues of interest to Lowcountry residents.

Some of our newest members may have come to one of our meetings as a guest, found the program interesting and joined our League. To learn more about what the League does or has done in this community, you can peruse our literature at meetings. However, you may find it even more interesting to have a conversation with one of our longtime members. They have such interesting stories to tell.

We vary our meeting locations between Hilton Head and Bluffton to serve our increasing Lowcountry membership, currently at 130. This includes women and men. The current membership list is available to members by contacting either Diane Neal at ddneal106@aol.com or myself, Ellie Dixon at bobel@hargray.com. The membership list is only for our members and is to be used solely for League business.

Again, to all our new members, welcome aboard!



Please join your
League of Women Voter friends
 for a
Holiday Luncheon
 featuring

Elisabeth MacNamara, LWVUS President
 on the occasion of LWVHI/BA's 30th anniversary year

Wednesday, December 9th
 Country Club of Hilton Head
 Hilton Head Plantation
 11:30 Social Time 12:00 Luncheon

Menu

Appetizer antipasto
 Chicken a la King on puffed pastry
 or a
 Vegetarian alternative
 Assorted mini desserts
 Iced and hot tea, coffee
 Cash Bar



RSVP by December 2 by sending a check payable to LWVHI/BA and this form to
Mary Jo Happle
 3 Pine Sky Court
 Hilton Head Island, SC 29926

Tell the guard at the gate that you are going to the Country Club of Hilton Head. Ask for directions if you need them.

I plan to attend the Dec. 9 luncheon _____
 I will be accompanied by these _____
 guests _____
 Number of meals @\$30* _____
 Number of vegetarian meals @\$30* _____
 Amount enclosed: _____

*Meal charge includes luncheon costs and a nominal amount to help defray 2015-2016



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www.lwvhi.org



maintain more because the state is eager to “devolve” to the county those roads not eligible for federal matching funds. In turn, the county will press for state funds to assist in maintenance. Overall, the Council is faced with a conundrum: increase taxes in order to get ahead of the curve—which most taxpayers don’t like—or wait until the state of disrepair is critical, which leads to citizen complaints.

Chairman Sommerville feels the County Council has managed its operating expenses well and saved taxpayers’ money. Displaying a chart showing Beaufort County’s budget growth since 2008, Sommerville demonstrated that the county has been spending about \$100 million per year from 2008 to 2015. Since these numbers are not adjusted for inflation, Council has saved about \$30 million annually and has not indiscriminately cut programs and staff. When it comes to capital expenditures, the county has many future needs: replacing the Hilton Head bridges (a 10-year project); re-engineering the failed intersection at McGarvey’s Corner; HVAC and roof replacements; building upgrades; a new detention center. Therefore, the Council will be looking at a possible referendum to borrow funds for capital needs. Alternatively, it could impose a capital sales tax, or citizens could support a local option sales tax. Sommerville prefers the latter since tourists would pay about 30-40 percent. One additional dollar in taxation would generate an additional \$30 million per year—70% of which would go to property tax abatement. Nine million dollars would be distributed among the county and municipalities. And the County could leverage/bond against its share.

Beaufort County currently has \$850 million in outstanding debt. The lion’s share is school debt. \$135 million is for the preservation of rural and critical lands.

In regard to economic development, Sommerville candidly admitted that nothing the county has done has been successful and that there is “no magic bullet.”

Mr. Sommerville responded to questions about educational funding, the flyover, the comprehensive plan, Administrator Kubic’s retirement plans, location and number of county office buildings, Council’s relationship with the school board, and fiscal autonomy for the school board, which he personally favors.

When asked what the biggest challenges for the county were in the next 25 years, Sommerville replied, “Roads and water quality and infrastructure.”



Introducing Diane Neal

Diane Neal grew up in New York City and attended public schools there. After graduating from high school at the age of 16, she matriculated at Hunter College where she earned a B.A. in Sociology with a minor in Education and Psychology.

During Diane Neal's 37 year teaching career in New Jersey, she nurtured in her students the concept of becoming good citizens and taking an active role in the community. Diane garnered grants and fellowships on the local, national and international levels to enhance the curriculum with engaging student-centered experiences.

For a number of years, she was selected through a rigorous application process to participate in a variety of summer institutes. Diane was among a select cadre of twenty educators from across the United States who participated in the James F. Ackerman Civic Education Summer Institute for K – 8 Teachers at Purdue University during the summer of 1997. When Diane returned to her classroom, she proposed a variety of interdisciplinary activities to introduce and reinforce seven democratic principles: public good, individual rights, justice, equality, diversity, truth, and patriotism. Subsequently, Diane was awarded a New Jersey Council for the Humanities grant for a single session program entitled "Citizenship for the 21st Century." The focus of the session was to help colleagues develop viable strategies for providing young students with information and skills to understand and participate in civic and community life. Participants examined theories of citizenship in a democratic society as well as practical information and processes.

In November 1999, Diane was selected to be one of 200 Fulbright Memorial Fund Fellows and traveled to Japan. Her theme for her follow-on project "Be A Good Citizen and Reach Globally" was the focal point for many enriching presentations for her class and school community.

Diane retired in June 2010 and she and her husband, Herman, moved to Bluffton in January 2011. Now she has more time to practice what she taught her students by taking an active role in the League of Women Voters of Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area. She joined in 2013 and is currently the LWVHHI/Bluffton Area Membership Co Chair with Ellie Dixon. Diane is also a member of other volunteer organizations such as Women In Philanthropy of the Lowcountry. The 2011WIP grant theme "*Literacy: The Need to Read*" tugged at her heart and motivated her to join WIP.

While in college, Diane joined Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. in 1970. It is a national organization founded on January 13, 1913 at Howard University in Washington, DC by 22 college educated African-American women. The Founders' first act of service was to march in the March 1913 Women's Suffrage in Washington, DC. The sorority's programs are all based on the Five Programmatic Thrust which include Economic Development; Educational Development; International Awareness and Involvement; Physical and Mental Health, and Political Awareness and Involvement. There are more than 900 chapters in the US and abroad. When Diane moved to Bluffton she wanted to continue her involvement in the sorority. She is one of 29 charter members of Hilton Head Island – Bluffton Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. HHIBAC was chartered on February 26, 2012 to service the Hilton Head/Greater Bluffton area and Hardeeville.



Notes from SC State League of Women Voters Board Meeting, 9/19/15

The state board meets four Saturday's a year, centrally in Columbia. I am serving my first year as a Voter Services Representative. Sue Yearwood is serving as membership representative. The diversity of topics, knowledge of issues and willingness to share efforts and talents were very evident in the five hour gathering as well as a tasty lunch.

A few of the topics for report and discussion included:

- Medicaid expansion - Close the gap;
- Carolina Ethics reform (we keep trying);
- Working with AARP to thank the legislators who support reform;
- Offshore drilling - the League has a state resolution opposing same;
- Title 50 SC Health Education Law - League is collaborating with SCEA to lobby on issues.
- Abbeville Decision- League encouraged to apply pressure to legislators to follow Court's decision though letter writing.
- New Voting Machines- Eleanor Hare is drafting a letter to State Election Commission. Needed a professional computer scientist for the study commission .



An extensive discussion ended our meeting, producing ideas for State League Conventions to come. Clemson will host the gathering in 2017. A popular idea was to hold it centrally (Columbia) with rotating host leagues.

Please contact me if there is a topic you would like to learn more about
Sue Feutz. "Fights"
843-415-6445
Feutzs@yahoo.com

NOTE - Sue Yearwood and Sue Feutz are Vice Presidents on the LWVSC Board and former members of the LWVHHI/BA Board.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF
HILTON HEAD ISLAND/
BLUFFTON AREA



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.

2015: Nov. 5, Dec. 3 (place to be determined).

2016: Jan. 7, Feb. 4, Mar. 2, Apr. 7, May 5 (place to be determined)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

November 4 - Natural Resources/Land Use Committee meeting at Dunkin Donuts in Hilton Head. At 2:00 PM

November 16 - Education Committee meeting at the home of Kathy Quirk. For directions and pass, call Kathy at 843-836-2892

November 18 - "Democracy for Sale?" Part I consensus meeting - Bluffton Public Library at 10:00 AM.

December 9 - Holiday Luncheon, Country Club of Hilton Head, Hilton Head Plantation, 11:30 AM

January 13, 2016 - "Democracy for Sale?" Part II consensus meeting, Hilton Head PSD, 10:00 AM

OFFICERS

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