

# Lighthouse

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

## February 8 Program Planning Meeting

At our program planning meeting in February, members get a chance to influence state and local public policy positions. Join us at 10:00 AM on Wednesday, February 8 at Hilton Head PSD on Oak Park Road, off Mathews Drive on Hilton Head Island.

We will review state positions, which can be found at [www.lwvsc.org](http://www.lwvsc.org), to determine whether they should be retained, dropped, or reconsidered (i.e. updated or revised).

We will also recommend state action priorities for 2017-2019. The action priorities for 2015-2017 were: voter access and the election process, education, ethics reform, natural resources, transportation, tax reform, judicial reform, and healthcare reform.

If desired by members, we can recommend a new state study. For 2015-2017, it was healthcare reform.

All of our ideas will be sent to the LWVSC Board by March 1. The Board, in turn, will determine what suggestions should be passed on to the state convention delegates for action. The convention will be held in Columbia on April 29-30.

Locally, we will review our own positions, which can be found on our website [www.lwvhi.org](http://www.lwvhi.org). Suggested changes will be taken up by our local board in March and, if approved, presented to the membership in April and voted on at our annual meeting in May.

Join the program planning session on February 8 to voice your ideas and opinions. Although only members can participate in the discussion, visitors are welcome as observers.

## The First Conversation

On Wednesday, January 11 at 2:00 PM at the Campbell Chapel A.M.E. Church in Bluffton, the League held a program entitled "Creating a Beloved Community: A Conversation on Race Relations." It is the first of what we hope will be an ongoing series. The initial program focused on relations with African-Americans in the area.

As people streamed into the church, we ran out of handouts. The total numbered more than 200. We were pleased and awed by the positive reception.

After Dr. Jon Black, the head pastor of the church, welcomed everyone, moderator Luana Graves Sellars introduced the panel of five. Sellars a native of New York is a relatively recent arrival to the area. She has been a publicist, handled advertising accounts, and set up early learning centers. Locally, she is on the board of the Heritage Library and is a contributing writer for the *Hilton Head Monthly* and the *Bluffton Monthly* magazines.

The five panel members were David Ames, Dr. Jon Black, Fran Heyward Bollin, Alexander Brown, Jr., and Dot Law. Ames is a long-term resident of the area, a Hilton Head Island Town Councilman, and a member of the Bridge Builders. Bollin is a native of Bluffton, a member of the League of Women Voters, an author, and a former editor of *The Island Packet*. Brown is a fifth generation Native Islander, a businessman, a chair of the HHI Planning Commission, and a Bridge Builder. Law is a League member, a Bridge Builder, (Continued on page 3)



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## Message from the President



*Making  
Democracy  
Work*

At one of the planning meetings prior to our January 11 conversation on race relations, we discussed how we might measure the success of the event. I don't think we came to a conclusion, but I think it is fair to say that the conversation was successful. We certainly had a big and diverse audience, and we have received a lot of positive feedback and even some new League members.

Our success is thanks to Dr. Jon Black, who hosted the event in his beautiful church; our extremely capable moderator, Luana Graves Sellars; the excellent presentations by panelists Alex Brown, Fran Bollin, Dot Law, David Ames and Dr. Black; the participation of the audience and the hard work of the planning committee, led by Vice-President Joan Kinne-Shulman.

Also contributing to our success were the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committees of Hilton Head Island and Bluffton, who included our meeting as a part of their programs, and everyone who helped publicize the meeting. The flyer created by new League member Heather Bragg was especially effective.

What we obviously cannot claim is coming up with a magic formula to resolve racial issues. All we did was to take a small step in a positive direction and to commit to trying to take more steps to improve relations among people of different races and ethnicities, including Latinos. At this point, I don't know what those steps will be, but I'm guessing they will focus on (1) advocating for changes in laws and regulations and (2) creating opportunities for people who don't usually get together to socialize so they can build trust, understanding and friendship.

Fran Holt



Fran Holt welcomes "Conversation" participants. Left to right: Alex Brown, Fran Bollin, moderator Luana Sellars, Dot Law, David Ames, and Jon Black

Over two hundred people gathered for our League's first conversation on "Creating the Beloved Community."



and a former commissioner of the Hilton Head PSD.

Brown started off by talking about his family background and expressing disappointment that Hispanics and those who might hold different views about coming together were not included in this first conversation. He also noted that Native Islanders were not entirely happy with the way the HHI town government had developed since its inception in 1983.

Bollin, descended from a slave-owning family, chronicled life in the area from before the Civil War to about the mid-twentieth century. Blacks and whites knew one another and depended on one another, but blacks worked for whites, not the other way around. Blacks were also subjected to indignities, such as having to use blacks-only entrances to public buildings and worse,

Law spoke about the Bridge Builders group. Its purpose is to help diverse groups learn about and understand one another. Currently, the Bridge Builders are trying to help those affected by Hurricane Matthew learn about what help is available. She also indicated that the recent reworking of the HHI Land Management Ordinance (LMO) created mistrust between the town government and the Native Islanders. The latter felt that the revisions tended to favor developers. Law believes that the availability of low-cost housing is an issue that local governments need to address.

Ames talked about the role of the HHI town government in serving all justly. Early policies of the government contributed to the mistrust of the Native Islanders toward the newcomers, as did a lack of awareness and sensitivity on the part of new residents to local concerns. The town is now making it a priority to correct longstanding issues such as the lack of sewers in parts of the island. Ames stressed that citizens should listen to and truly hear one another.

Black drew on his experience as a marriage counselor to offer guidelines for better communication among groups. Each party should recognize the validity of the other's views. Each should practice "active listening," perhaps by restating what each just heard the other say. Boundaries should be set on "assertive speaking." In order for relationships to be successful, we must love and respect each other.

Sellers then asked panel members to suggest ways to bridge gaps between groups. Their answers included holding gatherings such as the "One Island, One Community" picnic on HHI, spending time with people different from yourself to alleviate distrust, recognizing one another's contributions to society, realizing that public policies need to overcome past grievances.

Sellers also asked the panel, on a scale of one to ten, where we are with race relations in the area. The consensus seemed to be at about five. More work needs to be done to address social and economic divides and to overcome the isolating effects of gated communities, which create barriers to having conversations among various groups.

Many in the audience made comments. Mayor Bennett of HHI wondered what each of us is doing to be the "light in the darkness" of not knowing each other's needs and concerns. Others urged all to be better than what we may have been taught about the negative qualities of others. Additional concerns the audience brought up were the need for workforce housing, removing barriers to voter registration and early voting, and solving the heirs property issues. The League was urged to hold more meetings such as this one—and do so sooner rather than later.

The meeting lasted about two hours. A video of the event can be viewed on the WSAV website.

—Joan Kinne-Shulman



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**Visit our Web Site**

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

## Two Personal Perspectives on the Women's March in Washington, DC



I just returned from an exhilarating experience—my participation in the Women's March in Washington, DC on Saturday, Jan. 21, 2017. It was a first for me. I suppose, I am now considered an official political activist. The day was historic for me, my fellow South Carolinians, our country and the world.

Two buses full of excited Hilton Head Islanders left at 10 PM on Friday night and headed to our nation's capital. Once we arrived ten hours later, we all realized when we saw the throngs of women, men and children heading to the Metro for the ride to the protest area along the mall, that this march was a huge grassroots movement.

Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators came from all over the country to have their voices heard. As far as one could see, there were women marching in an orderly fashion. They represented ethnic, religious, cultural, and sexual diversity. Many held posters and signs with messages that focused on a wide array of issues with slogans such as "This is what democracy looks like" and "Women's Rights are Human Rights." Thousands wore pink knit hats with ears. The marchers chanted, sang and shouted. And, every so often, a very loud roar erupted from the crowd.

I marched for hours with five friends, taking pictures, getting to know folks from so many far-away places, and sharing our reasons for marching in this joyful and peaceful demonstration of women's power. I was pleased to meet fellow League of Women Voters members from Virginia and North Carolina. We never did get to see or hear the inspiring speeches of the morning, but it didn't matter because we all felt we were making a difference. The mood was uplifting; the weather was perfect; and, the marchers felt empowered.

It wasn't until later that evening that we learned from calls to family members and via social media that over one million women participated in rallies in cities all over the country and world in support of our march. We arrived back in Hilton Head at 6 AM on Sunday morning. What an extraordinary experience! I will never forget it.

—Sandy Stern

Much has been written and spoken and filmed about this truly grassroots demonstration of what millions are thinking and have had no way to express. Little of the actual march went as planned because it was so big, but that didn't really matter. To see the massive turnout, starting with the daunting line to buy Metro passes and to experience the energy of so many people was, for me, a memory I will have forever. What to do with that memory, in order to keep the promise of that moment and place, is a question to ponder, and I hope all who marched and all who were inspired can find a way to help correct what we protested. March organizers have posted their ideas for action (10 Actions / 100 Days) at <https://www.womensmarch.com/>

I am thankful for all who worked to organize the Women's March on Washington and to keep us safe. It was an amazing day. So many people gathered to insist that their lives matter, that their rights be protected, that no ground that has been won be lost, that their planet be protected and that world peace be a higher priority than any individual's agenda.

I especially want to thank Sandy Stern, who first informed me and others about the possibility of a demonstration or march. She then went to Ravenel, SC to investigate bus transportation, and she kept on going after that. Without her initiative, our delegation would very likely have been smaller.

According to Women's March on Washington - South Carolina, "Over 2,000 of us headed to DC to march for human rights, women's rights and justice. And even more joined sister marches across the state! We were peaceful, joyful, kind and compassionate. We surpassed every estimate and expectation in this country and around the world. We made history together."

--Janet Law





### Natural Resources/Land Use Committee

This committee -- the latest incarnation of a committee with an interest in conservation and land use planning for our League-- has been meeting since February of 2015. We have heard from speakers on transportation at various levels of government with various interests, from the Bluffton Parkway flyovers, shared ways of getting people on and off Hilton Head Island, biking and bikeways, a trolley system on the island, "devolution" of roads from the state's bloated highway system to the counties, reform of the State Department of Transportation and means of funding it, needs and impact of the coming Jasper County Port, and more.

We are interested in regional planning, looking at inter-connectivity and best uses of the land. We have been concerned with tree ordinances, both town and county. "Forest health" has emerged as a concern following Hurricane Matthew. Preserving our area's natural beauty and balancing that against proposals for development is a concern.

If any of these topics are of interest to you, or if you have others to propose for the committee's consideration, please join us the fourth Wednesday of each month at 2:00 PM at Coastal States Bank on Main Street on Hilton Head Island.

—Sally McGarry, Chair

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



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

[@LWVHHIBA](https://twitter.com/LWVHHIBA)

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**

**February 1**—Education Committee Meeting, Home of Kathy Quirk 10 AM

**February 8**—Local Program Planning General Meeting, Hilton Head PSD, 10 AM

**February 22**—Natural Resources/Land Use Committee Meeting, Coastal States Bank, Hilton Head, 2:00 PM



LWVHHI/BA members participated in the Martin Luther King March on Hilton Head.

**OFFICERS**

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**OFF-BOARD POSITIONS**

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