

Lighthouse

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



May 11 Annual Meeting/Luncheon Honors Elected Women

Our League filled the dining room to capacity at the Country Club of Hilton Head on May 10. Over 60 League members along with eleven female elected officials—all honorees—attended the event.

League of Women Voters HHI/BA President Fran Holt welcomed everyone and spoke of the League's appreciation for the service of the elected officials and their impact as role models for other women who may be inspired to run for elected office in the future. A grant from our state titled 'Making Democracy Work' enabled the League to honor:

- Beaufort County School Board Chairperson Patricia Felton-Montgomery, and Board Members Evva Anderson, Mary Cordray, Cynthia Gregory-Small, Dr. Christina Gwozdz, and JoAnn Orischak
- Beaufort County Councilwoman Alice Howard
- Beaufort County Treasurer Maria Walls
- Beaufort County Clerk Jerri Ann Roseneau
- Town of Bluffton Mayor Lisa Sulka
- Hilton Head Island Town Councilwoman Kim Likins

Guest speaker Jane Perdue spoke on the Status of Women in South Carolina. As former president of the Board of Directors of the Center for Women in Charleston, Jane spoke with authority on issues that directly affect and pertain to women. (See page four for highlights of her presentation.) Progress may be slow, but it was obvious that members in the room believed that if we persevere, the status of women in South Carolina can only improve. Women supporting women translates into success

Catherine Forrester, president of the new Beaufort League, joined us. Dot Law and Nancy Williams, who were elected at the meeting as co-presidents of our League, and Forrester will lead our two local Leagues in doing all we can to make democracy work.

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L to R: Cordray, Walls, Roseneau, Anderson, Felton-Montgomery, Gregory-Small, Howard, Sulka, Orischak, Gwozdz, Likins



**Making
Democracy
Work**

Message from the Co-Presidents

What a privilege it is in these dynamic and energized political times to serve as your leaders. As an organization respected for consensus building and civility, the League has a unique opportunity to capitalize on a post-election resurgence in civic engagement and to channel that energy into respectful speaking and meaningful listening, with positive results as the outcome.



Dot Law, Nancy Williams

Our board will be meeting this summer to take stock of perceived opportunities and challenges in the changing political and demographic landscape and to determine how our League will continue to be a growing, vibrant organization in the years to come. Change is inevitable, but we will embrace it and make adjustments needed to allow the changes to benefit us all.

In 2020 the League of Women Voters of the United States will celebrate its one hundredth anniversary. Over that time the League has welcomed Democrats, Republicans, and Independents and—more recently—men as well as women, non-citizens as well as citizens, and persons sixteen years of age as well as those older. We are strong because of our non-partisanship and our diversity.

Although diverse, we are united in a common mission of promoting informed participation in our democracy. We invite you to become an active member by not only attending general membership meetings, which resume in September, but also by becoming a committee member in an area of your interest or expertise.

Yes, these are exciting and changing times. With our involved membership we will harness the energy and Make Democracy Work!

~Dot Law and Nancy Williams, Co-Presidents

DEMOCRACY– PASS IT ON! State League Priorities 2017-2019

The League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) Program and Action Priorities for 2017-2019 (affirmed at the LWVSC Convention in Columbia, SC held on April 29-30):

- Voter Access and the Election Process
- Redistricting – with the 2020 census just 2 ½ years away, redistricting and the consequences of gerrymandering will be a major focus of LWV at the national, state and local levels. The LWVSC is currently working on gearing up for a statewide focus on redistricting. Local participation in this effort will be crucial. Expect to hear more about how we can support this effort, beginning this fall.
- Ethics reform and money in politics, especially “dark money”
- Regulatory reform
- Education
- Health Care
- Natural resources including climate change, recycling and regulation/de-regulation

Position statements and priorities for 2015-2017 were also affirmed, in some instances with revisions. The positions statements reviewed, discussed and affirmed included: Child Welfare, Criminal Justice, Juvenile Justice, Education, Health Care, Natural Resources, State & Local Government (including electoral democracy), State & Local Taxation, and Transportation.

More detailed information can be found at the LWVSC website, <http://www.lwvsc.org/issuesandaction.html> . An updated Agenda for Action will be available in late summer.

~MaryAnn Bromley, State Issues & Advocacy Chair

LWVSC 2017 Convention Inspires State Leaders



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The annual convention of the League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) was held on April 29-30 in Columbia on the campus of the University of South Carolina (USC). All 72 delegates were housed at The Inn at USC. We had plenty of time over breakfast and lunch to network with the other delegates and share information.

Representing our League were Fran Holt, Dot Law, Nancy Williams, MaryAnn Bromley, Sally McGarry, and Ruth Wilwerding. Sue Yearwood, the state membership chair for the past two years, was in attendance as well.

South Carolina has eleven local Leagues plus a new Beaufort group, which was represented by Nina Rumbough. Total state membership is 692 with Charleston having the largest membership at 148. Our League at 119 members is the second largest. Beaufort will add to the total state number because they now have over 30 members.

The first speaker on Saturday morning was Pamela Goodwin, President of the Florida League. Her topic was Our Battle for Redistricting. Her talk was very inspirational because of the commitment by the members of the Florida League to see this project to the end. They started this battle in 2005 when many Leaguers collected signatures on petitions that would put a redistricting amendment on the ballot in 2006. The amendments finally appeared on 2010 ballots and were passed by 63% of the voters. The governor and the legislature fought against the amendments. The big day was December 2 when the Florida Supreme Court ruled in the League's favor and the newly drawn redistricting maps were used for the 2016 election. This is dedication to the cause.

On Sunday morning, we heard from Wylecia Wiggs Harris, Executive Director, League of Women Voters of the United States. The focus of her talk was that the League needs to transform rather than change. Current civic engagement is good for the League but there is increased competition from other groups such as Indivisible. Our non-partisan stance will not change but the League needs to increase engagement and form partnerships with new organizations.

The program/agenda for the weekend included a report written by each local president. Many of the Leagues are forming partnerships with other Leagues especially when we do voter registration. Charleston reached out to the community with movies on social topics as a way to expand membership. The Florence League used the movie "Suffragette" as part of a program on Women's Equality Day.

It was a great experience to attend the state convention and meet so many dedicated women who for years have studied an issue, taken consensus, and then lobbied for change. The League has always meant a commitment by its members to stay informed which is easier now with e-mails, Twitter and Facebook. Also, the methods of sharing information listed means it will be easier to lobby our representatives and inform our local communities. Thus, my impression as someone who first joined the League many years ago is that we need our new energetic members (Charleston had many), in Wylecia Wiggs Harris' words, "to increase the visibility of the League and change how people see us."

~Ruth Wilwerding

Attending the conference:
L to R Sally McGarry, Sue Yearwood, Dot Law, Nancy Williams, MaryAnn Bromley, Nina Rumbough. Front: Fran Holt, Ruth Wilwerding.



Plenty of Mountains to Climb



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Jane Perdue, CEO/Founder of The Jane Group and nationally recognized leadership trainer, energized 70+ attendees at the League of Women Voters HHI/BA annual meeting and luncheon with a call to action. Retelling the story of a final snowflake that broke the branch, she challenged, "The same holds true for charting the course for change in the status of South Carolina women and girls. The voice that's lacking belongs to each one of us."

The Center for Women, a Charleston nonprofit focused on connecting women with success, paints a sobering picture in its report: "The Status of Women in South Carolina." <http://www.c4women.org/statusreport2015/> Statistics confirm that South Carolina is rich with opportunity for women, 51% of its population.

Leadership- women's representation at work, in government, and on public boards
14 % of South Carolina legislature seats are held by women, well below the national average of 24%. Only 18% of the 222 individuals who ran for 2014 statewide office were women.

Health and safety- women's personal safety and access to health and child care
South Carolina ranks 42nd nationally for infant mortality, and 5th for deadly violence against women.

Education- women's access to academic attainment
Though 26% of women have a bachelor's degree or higher, and another 61% have a high school degree or further schooling, education isn't translating into high demand, high paying jobs. Women fill only 28% of STEM jobs, typically as nurses or social workers. Women fill only 29% of statewide apprenticeships.

Economic Security- a stable income that funds basic needs
South Carolina is one of only three states without equal pay laws. A similarly employed man earns \$1.20 for every dollar a woman earns. One in five South Carolina women are among the working poor; South Carolina ranks 43rd nationally for its rate of women in poverty.



Jane Perdue challenges, "The voice that is lacking belongs to each one of us" to improve the status of SC women.

What can one do? Run for elected office. Serve on a board. Pursue that job promotion. At 30% participation, women reach the crucial mass to impact a group. Change stereotypes by encouraging girls to pursue non-traditional jobs. Mentor a woman. Promote family leave policies. Inform elected officials and hold them accountable on women's issues.

And look for details of the League's September 13 kick off meeting in the next edition of *Lighthouse*. Bring a friend. Like Jane, let's make a difference for women and South Carolina this year!

Local Leaguers Prominent at State Level

Past League of Women Voters HHI/BA Presidents Fran Holt and Sally McGarry were elected to statewide positions at the League of Women Voters of South Carolina (LWVSC) Convention on April 30. Fran Holt will serve as 2017-2019 LWVSC Treasurer and Sally McGarry will serve as Nominating Committee Chair for 2019.

Sue Yearwood, retiring LWVSC Vice President of Membership for 2015-2017, was commended for her leadership and her service on the Nominating and Budget Committees.

Congratulations to all!

New Year Kicks Off September 13

The first general membership meeting of the new League year will be held Wednesday, September 13. Note that membership meetings, which are open to the public, generally take place on the second Wednesday of the month at 10:00 AM. We try to alternate venues between Hilton Head Island and Bluffton.

The location and topic of the meeting are yet to be determined. Our October meeting will be the fourth in our "Continuing Conversation Series." It will focus on the theme of "Making Democracy Work: Voting Rights." The place, time, and presenters are yet to be determined.

Look for more details about the fall meetings in the September issue of *Lighthouse*.

~Joan Kinne-Shulman, Program Chair

2017-2018 Board, Nominating Committee Elected

The following officers and directors were elected for two-year terms at our May 11 annual meeting.

Dot Law and Nancy Williams, Co-Presidents
Jan Ferrari, Secretary
Heather Bragg and Ellen Dahl, Co-Membership Chairs
MaryAnn Bromley, State Issues and Advocacy Chair

Fran Holt was elected as Nominating Committee Chair and Diane Neal and Flo Rosse were as elected as Nominating Committee members for 2017-2018.



Old and incoming board members gathered for lunch after the May board meeting.

Visit our website
<http://www.lwhhi.org>



**Making
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In Memoriam: Ronni Silett

Long-time League member Ronni Silett passed away in June after a brief illness. Following a business career in New York City, Ronni moved full time to Hilton Head Island. In addition to our League, she was an active member of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the Coast Guard Auxiliary, and the Martin Luther King Celebration Committee. She was a founding board member of Safe Harbour, an organization dedicated to helping senior citizens age in place. Ronni was a member of the Harbour Town Yacht Club and also served as a volunteer for The Literacy Center's annual Cooks & Books event.

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Monthly Calendar of Events

Officers and Board 2017- 2018

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

August 16—Voter Service Committee Meeting, 11:30 AM, Truffles at Belfair (91 Towne Drive, Bluffton). Members needed to facilitate voter registration and look for creative ways to encourage people to vote. Interested? Please call or email Ruth_Wilwerding@yahoo.com, 843-671-5562.

September 13—General Membership Meeting, 10:00 AM. Location and topic to be announced.

OFFICERS

Co-Presidents:
Dot Law 843-842-5622
Nancy Williams 843-681-4212
Vice-President, Program Chair:
Joan Kinne-Shulman 843-842-9246
Treasurer:
Mary Jo Happle 843-689-3952
Secretary:
Jan Ferrari 303-916-9583(c)

We Need You!

As we begin a new program year, our League is seeking members who would like to serve on various committees.

Do your interests lie in the areas of Education, Membership, Natural Resources, Local Issues/Observer Corps, State Government/Advocacy and/or Voter Service?

Please contact the committee chairs to sign up or to get more information. Their names and contact information appear on the right.

DIRECTORS

Communications:
Sandy Stern 843-342-4834
Education:
Kathy Quirk 843-836-2892
Membership:
Heather Bragg 843-415-3490
Ellen Dahl 843-785-2115
Observer Corps/Local Issues:
Sally McGarry 843-342-9254
State Issues/Advocacy:
MaryAnn Bromley 843-298-2320
Voter Service:
Ruth Wilwerding 843-671-5562



Off-Board Positions

Archivist: Connie Voight
Facebook: Heather Bragg
Meeting and Events Planner: Jan Billingslea
Natural Resources/Land Use: Sally McGarry
Newsletter: Mary Agnes Garman
Nominating: Fran Holt
Webmaster: David Rice