

# Lighthouse

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

## January 11 Meeting To Focus On Race Relations

The topic of our first meeting in 2017, "Creating the Beloved Community: A Conversation on Race Relations," will likely be a challenging one. The meeting is scheduled for January 11 at 2:00 P.M. (Note the change in time from our usual morning sessions.) It will take place in the Campbell Chapel A.M.E. Church, 25 Boundary Street in Bluffton. It is open to members, guests and the general public.

Dr. Jon Black, senior pastor of the Campbell Chapel A.M.E. Church will welcome everyone and serve on a panel of five. As panelist, he will talk about the role of churches in bringing diverse groups together. Other panel members are Dot Law, League member and long-time resident, talking about the Bridge Builders Group; David Ames, longtime resident current member of the Hilton Head Island Town Council, talking about the role of government in serving all groups in the community; Alex Brown, Jr., Hilton Head Island Planning Commission Chairman and Native Islander, talking about the issues of concern to that group; and Fran Bollin, nee Heyward, native of Bluffton, former editor of *The Island Packet*, author and a League member, talking about her experiences and sharing her perspective. A moderator will facilitate the discussion. She is Luana Graves Sellars, a former educator and business person, currently a feature writer for *Hilton Head Monthly*.

After the presentations, audience members will be encouraged to ask questions and present their concerns and ideas for improving communication and understanding among diverse groups.

We hope this program will be the first of a series of "conversation" programs. Please join us on January 11.

## Senator Davis Lays Out Priorities for 2017

Guest speaker SC Senator Tom Davis outlined his priorities for the 2017 South Carolina legislative session and responded to audience questions at the League's holiday luncheon on December 14.

He identified three local and three state priorities.

### Local priorities:

1. The design and financing plan for bridges to Hilton Head Island. The eastbound span of the Bowers Bridge has financing, but there is no financing for the others. Davis will be working to line up recurring funding to shore up and expand the bridges to three lanes in each direction.
2. Continuing preparations for the Jasper Port. A permit to build the terminal in five years is in hand, but it will take four years to get the necessary supporting infrastructure, i.e. the widening of Hwy. 17 to four or five lanes, creating a port access road, and extending rail lines from Savannah to the port.
3. Increasing state recurring funding for USCB so that it approaches the statewide average. Beaufort County has been picking up a disproportionate share.

(continued on page 3)

## Inside This Issue

January 11 Meeting	1
Senator Davis Talk at December Luncheon	1
Message from President	2
MLK Celebrations	2
Davis Talk (continued)	3
LEAD Day	3
Observer Corps	3
Mark Your Calendars	4
Officers and Board	4



## Message from the President



**Making  
Democracy  
Work**

It is my pleasure to report that we once again have Patricia Felton Montgomery on our board. She will serve as State Issues/Advocacy Chair until the Annual Meeting in May. The fact that she is now serving as a member of the Beaufort County Board of Education no longer prevents her from serving on our board. After careful consideration, our board revised its nonpartisan policy to say that board members (other than president, vice president and voter service chair) may run for and hold nonpartisan elected offices.

Having a State Issues/Advocacy Chair will be very helpful. During a recent telephone conference call led by LWVSC Co-President JoAnne Day and Vice President for Member Services Sue Yearwood, the participating local League presidents, including me, made it clear that we think advocating our positions is a top priority. It was evident that we want advocacy to be the primary focus at the 2017 LEAD. That certainly seems appropriate, because LEAD stands for "League Education and Advocacy Day!"



At this year's LEAD, LWVSC Vice President for Issues and Action, Lynn Teague, will help us learn how to be effective during the new legislative session. We will also hear from Patrick Dennis, Speaker of the House's Counsel and former Chief Counsel of the House Judiciary Committee, who will give us insight on how the General Assembly works. Another speaker will be Amy Armstrong, Executive Director and General Counsel of the SC Environmental Law Project. She will talk about advocacy for natural resources in our state.

Natural Resources is one of LWVSC's priorities for 2016-2017. Others are Voter Access and the Election Process, Money in Politics, Base Load Review Act, Education, Tax Reform and Home Rule. To see our state positions and priorities in detail, go to <http://www.lwvsc.org/files/leaguepositions20152017.pdf>

Of course, as made clear by Senator Davis in his talk at the holiday luncheon, there are also issues of particular interest to our area.

**It would be wonderful to have lots of our members attend LEAD. For information about attending, please see the flier attached to this newsletter.**

Another way to learn about what's happening during the legislative session is to participate in the conference calls that Lynn Teague leads. Information about how to participate in those calls will be shared with members when it's available.

Let's do what we can to make a difference and to make democracy work!

Fran Holt

### League Participation in Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration

In addition to attending the League's meeting on race relations on January 11, members of our League are encouraged to participate in marches on Hilton Head Island and/or in Bluffton on January 16. Members of our League have enjoyed doing this and also attending MLK Day programs for many years. Details about when and where to meet will be emailed to members when the information is available

(Senator Davis continued from page 1)

State priorities:

1. Repair of our state roads and bridges. Although some legislators have proposed an increase in the gas tax to pay for deferred and future maintenance, (SC's tax is the second lowest in the nation), Davis feels that a commission needs to be appointed to fix a politically-driven process before the consideration of raising the gas tax.
2. K-12 education. The South Carolina Supreme Court's Abbeville decision requires the legislature to come up with a proposed remedy to our state's failure to provide requisite educational opportunity for all our children. Because South Carolina ranks 24<sup>th</sup> among the states for educational expenditures, Davis believes that money is not the issue. He feels that parental choice and competition will lead to improvements in outcomes and advocates expanding tax credits for parents to help disabled children go to private school from \$10 million to \$25 million and setting aside an additional \$25 million in tax credits for donors whose money would pay for poor children to attend private or parochial schools.
3. Healthcare. Davis concurs with our governor's decision to not expand Medicaid (with federal support as part of the ACA) because he feels that the increased costs, added to the national debt, cannot be borne and will create a "house of cards" that will crash. He is not opposed to the government having a role in providing access to healthcare and subsidizing care for poor people, but he favors health savings accounts. He feels the current system can be fixed by reducing scope of practice restrictions so as to empower physician assistants and nurse practitioners, by using telemedicine to deliver healthcare in rural areas, and by contracting the population of subsidized recipients.

A spirited question and answer session followed Davis' remarks, particularly those pertaining to healthcare and education. When audience members' views differed from those of Davis, he countered by saying that it is his position that market competition and choices deliver the best outcomes in healthcare and education. Davis also responded to questions about the Lieutenant Governor succession issue (he's filed a suit to resolve the constitutional and popular vote disparities), predatory lending, ethics reform, and gun safety. He supports an independent determination of ethical wrong-doing, disclosures of legislators' income, and screening/background checks for gun buyers.

**LWVSC LEAD Day: Making Democracy Work**

League leaders from around the state will gather in Columbia on January 28 for its Leadership, Education, and Advocacy Day. The theme for the Saturday gathering is "Making Democracy Work: Ready for 2018."

All League members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Information about the day's events and registration appears on an email attachment to this newsletter

A contingent from LWVHHI/BA will be attending. If you are interested in being part of our delegation and in carpooling to Columbia for the day, please contact Fran Holt at [franholthhbl@gmail.com](mailto:franholthhbl@gmail.com).

**Message from Sally McGarry, Observer Corps Chair**

The sign-up sheet I passed at the holiday luncheon, seeking new volunteers to observe and report on meetings of the Hilton Head Island Town Council and Planning Commission, and the same governmental bodies in Bluffton, served its purpose. I was pleased to get several new volunteers. I will be in touch with you individually by email or phone to put you in the schedule. In the meantime, if you wish to visit any of the bodies we observe, feel free to drop in and get a feel for how they operate and what the time commitment will be. The Hilton Head Island Planning Commission meets the first Wednesday of the month at 9:00 AM and the 3rd Wednesday at 3:00 PM. The Council meets the first and third Tuesdays at 4:00 PM. The January 17 meeting of the Council will be in the Hilton Head Island Library. All other meetings are held at Town Hall.

The Bluffton Town Council's regular meeting is the second Tuesday at 6:00 PM. There is a workshop meeting the third Tuesday at the same time. The Bluffton Planning Commission meets the fourth Wednesday at 6:00 also. All meetings are held at Town Hall.



**Making  
Democracy  
Work**

**Visit our Web Site**

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

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

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Calendar of Events

**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**

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

**January 16**—Martin Luther King Day and Community Celebrations

**January TBD**—Natural Resources/Land Use Committee Meeting

**January 28**—LEAD Day in Columbia, 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

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

**CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK @**

League of Women Voters of  
Hilton Head Island/Bluffton Area

Officers and Board 2016- 2017

**OFFICERS**

President:	
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State Issues/Advocacy:	
Patricia Felton Montgomery	843-707-1036
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**OFF-BOARD POSITIONS**

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Meeting and Events Planner	Jan Billingslea
Natural Resources/Land Use	Sally McGarry
Newsletter/Nominating	Nancy Williams
Webmaster:	David Rice