



# The Voter

February, 2017

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## Letter from the President



Welcome to the beginning of our winter/spring programs and luncheons. I would like to wish each of you a happy new year, and I hope each of you has warm memories of the holidays. I also hope you will be interested in joining us for our monthly luncheon meetings at the Marriott Hotel as well as joining us for our study group. There are also several other committees you can become involved in such as the Observer Corps, Vote 18, Vote 411, voter registration, and membership. The chairs of these programs will be at the monthly luncheons at the Marriott and would love to meet you and to have you take part.

For the remainder of this season we will be conducting our study group at a new location. Instead of meeting at Jane Gordon's house, we will be meeting at All Saints Episcopal Church at 151 S. Ann Street (corner of Government and Ann Streets). We will begin at 5:30 p.m. Our study focus this year is behavioral and mental health services in our area. In keeping with this focus, we were delighted to have as our first speaker to address the study group, Mr. John Kilpatrick, Director of Veterans' Behavioral Health Needs and Issues.

Our first luncheon meeting was held on January 18 with Dr. Jacklyn Bunch as our speaker. Dr. Bunch is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at the University of South Alabama. She gave a very enlightening talk on the current state of mental and behavioral health services in Mobile County in comparison to the state and nation as a whole. See inside this newsletter for a summary of her report. In February, Halie Jones, Assistant Director of Substance Abuse Services from AltaPointe will focus on substance abuse, prescription pill abuse, what to do if you suspect someone is abusing drugs and policy changes.

This year will be filled with exciting events in April in that our annual meeting will be held at the Marriott Hotel on April 11, and in addition we will be hosting the State Convention on the weekend of April 28-30. More detail on both of these events will be forthcoming. Please save the date for each of these events!

I'm looking forward to all of you taking part in one way or another this year and please encourage your friends who would like to learn about the League to attend one of our monthly luncheons.

*Betsey L. Wooten, President  
League of Women Voters of Mobile*

## LWVM Officers & Directors

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## Contact Us

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## Calendar of Events

**LUNCH WITH THE LEAGUE** ó An opportunity to socialize with League members and listen to guest speakers presenting issues of importance to the League. Luncheons are held the **third Wednesday** of the month from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Marriott Hotel at 3101 Airport Boulevard. The buffet lunch is \$18.00. Reservations required. Call or email Jane Gordon at 251-626-3386 or [lovjan42@comcast.net](mailto:lovjan42@comcast.net).

**MONTHLY EVENING STUDY GROUP** ó Please join us on the second Monday of each month for our evening study group sessions. Evening study group is not only enlightening and informative but also quite enjoyable. We begin with an array of treats and appetizers and light conversation. We meet at All Saints Episcopal Church, 151 S. Ann Street (corner of Government and Ann Streets), from 5:30 until 7:00 p.m.

**VOTE 18** - Schools are calling and scheduling our national-award-winning, young-voter engagement program. Contact Myra Evans to learn more: [bobalouiemom@yahoo.com](mailto:bobalouiemom@yahoo.com) or 251-666-7914.

**February 7 – 6:30 p.m. – “Council in the Community.”** The Mobile City Council will meet at the Connie Hudson Senior Center on Hillcrest Road to provide citizens a better chance to attend a council meeting and meet with members of the Council and key city staff.

**February 13 – 5:30 p.m. – Evening Study Group** ó We will continue our study of behavioral and mental health services in our area ó All Saints Episcopal Church, 151 S. Ann Street.

**February 14 – 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. – LWVM Board Meeting** at VIA, 1717 Dauphin Street.

**February 15 – 11:30 a.m. – Lunch with the League** at the Marriott Hotel. Halie Jones, Assistant Director of Substance Abuse Services, AltaPointe, will focus on substance abuse.

### March 12-18 – Sunshine Week

**April 11 – Annual Meeting** at the Mobile Marriott. Please arrive by 5:45 p.m. ó business meeting starts promptly at 6:00 p.m.

**April 28, 29, and 30** ó League of Women Voters of Alabama State Convention in Mobile at the Hampton Inn & Suites, 62 South Royal Street. More information will be forthcoming.

### In Memoriam

Rachel Dudley, League of Women Voters of Mobile member since 2010, passed away on November 25, 2016. Rachel was employed by the Mobile Public Library and worked at the Ben May Main Library. Our deepest condolences are extended to Rachel's family.

*A Publication of the  
League of Women  
Voters of Mobile,  
Alabama*

*The League of Women  
Voters, a national,  
nonpartisan political  
organization, encourages  
the informed and active  
participation of citizens in  
government and  
influences policy through  
education and advocacy*

## Dr. Jaclyn Bunch is LWVM's First Speaker on Mental and Behavioral Health



Dr. Jaclyn Bunch, Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at the University of South Alabama, kicked off the LWVM's new program study on mental and behavioral health on January 18 at the Mobile Marriott.

In her presentation, Dr. Bunch reviewed the current state of health in Mobile County in comparison to the state and nation as a whole. She based her findings on a Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) which was done by the University of South Alabama. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires that not for-profit hospitals conduct a CHNA every three years. She discussed behavioral and mental health and the factors that influence it and shared the expressed needs and opinions of both healthcare professionals and residents.

The major conclusions for Mobile were: 1) there needs to be more mental healthcare facilities and providers to address depression and mental illness, 2) attention needs to be paid to corresponding factors and behaviors related to mental and behavioral health (child abuse, domestic violence and rape), and 3) our community may benefit from improving other predictors of mental/behavioral health such as increasing level of education, addressing socio-economic disparities (e.g., access to affordable transportation to health clinics and changing hours provided for appointments).

Dr. Bunch earned her Ph.D. in Political Science from Florida State University in 2014. Jaclyn has had her work accepted and published in numerous respected journals in her field. She also has several dedicated book chapters, including a recent publication in *The Guide to U.S Health and Health Care Policy*. Currently Jaclyn teaches for both political science and for the U.S.A Masters in Public Administration program. Prior to her endeavors in academia Jaclyn served as an Emergency Medical Technician for five years in New York State and attributes her concern for health care policy to her experiences in service.

**Voting is the foundation stone for political  
action.”**

**- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

## Vote 18 Update



It is that time again ó time to register high school students in Mobile County. As you are aware, there is a municipal election in the City of Mobile in August 2017, and we hope to get all eligible voters registered before the deadline.

On January 17, we brought our award-winning Vote 18 program to Mattie T. Blount High School and registered 48 new voters! Lella Lowe and Myra Evans were the team members that conducted the workshop. We are so appreciative of Janie Hildreth of Blount High School. We have

been working with her students for over five years!

For new members who have not heard of our Vote 18 program, it is a 45 minute, free program that leads the students through the history of voting, graphically illustrating voting laws and history. Through the dynamics of exclusion, mock elections, group interaction and rewards, students experience the economic and social impacts of voting. Vote 18 makes voting personal. Instead of telling students to vote, they become active participants in the democratic process and teach each other WHY they should vote. If you have any contacts in any of the high schools in Mobile County, please reach out to them and encourage them to schedule a Vote 18 session. We would also be happy to set up a voter registration table at the school if they do not have the class time to spare. They can get it on the schedule by emailing Myra Evans at [bobalouiemom@gmail.com](mailto:bobalouiemom@gmail.com)

We were delighted to learn that LWVM was awarded a pass-through grant of \$700 from the League of Women Voters Education Fund to support our work to engage first-time voters in 2017. Thank you to Mary Anne Wilson and her committee for preparing this grant.

## Welcome New Members!

**Alexandria Broadway**

**Peter Burns**

**Renea Burns**

**Bethany Carl**

**Allison Flowers**

**Carol S. Hoadley**

**Thomas B. Holmes**

**Thomas B. Holmes II**

**Betty Huff**

**Minnie Walker**

**Andrea Wright**

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## Program Update

By Linda Langan

The League of Women Voters of Mobile began the study of Mental and Behavioral Health in January 2017.

Dr. Jaelyn Bunch, Assistant Professor at the University of South Alabama, spoke at the League's January 18th luncheon at the Mobile Marriott. Dr. Bunch presented an excellent and informative PowerPoint on her research findings which focused on behavioral health in the Mobile area, and was followed by a very interactive Q and A session.

Lieutenant Colonel John Kilpatrick, Executive Director and founder of Veteran's Recovery, spoke at the LWVM's study group session on January 9. Lt. Col. Kilpatrick shared information about a veteran's organization that is newly forming in Mobile. Veteran's Recovery, once fully operational, will provide assistance and treatment to veterans in our area and beyond. We were informed that one in four of US veterans suffers from a serious mental health condition and/or addiction problem.

In the coming months, the League has lined up speakers who are recognized for their expertise on mental health issues. Topics to be discussed include community mental health needs, children and family health, how to recognize mental health issues in others and how to assist others to find the mental health care they need. Additionally, the League is working on securing a highly respected keynote speaker who serves the Mobile mental health community for the annual meeting scheduled for Tuesday evening, April 11 at the Marriott Hotel.

You can check for future educational events, luncheons, evening study group, and LWVM Annual Dinner events at <http://www.lwvmobile.org/calendar.html>

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## Halie Jones of AltaPointe to Speak on Dangers of Prescription Drug Abuse



Halie Jones, Assistant Director of Substance Abuse Services at AltaPointe, will speak to the League of Women Voters of Mobile on February 15, 2017, about the dangers of prescription drug abuse. Her presentation is entitled "A Global Epidemic with Community Roots" and will focus on substance abuse, prescription pill abuse, and what to do if you suspect someone is abusing drugs, as well as policy changes.

Ms. Jones received a Bachelor's degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of Alabama in 2004 and a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling from Lee University. She has worked at AltaPointe since 2014.

AltaPointe Health System is Alabama's largest and most comprehensive behavioral healthcare and psychiatric hospital system and the second largest in the southeastern US. Formerly known as Mobile Mental Health, this public, not-for-profit corporation oversees the systems of mental health, developmental disability and substance abuse

service provision in the Mobile area. AltaPointe serves approximately 23,000 individuals each year.

Join us at the Mobile Marriott, 3101 Airport Boulevard, on Wednesday, February 15 from 11:30-1:00. This event is open to the public, but reservations are required. Please RSVP to Jane Gordon at 402- 3321 or [lovjan42@comcast.net](mailto:lovjan42@comcast.net) by Monday, February 13th. Lunch is \$18 or \$19 by credit card. Free seating is also available -without luncheon- but a reservation is still required.



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## Opioid Addiction Epidemic in the US

by Linda Langan

Many forms of media have brought information to the general public explaining the exponential growth rate of opioid addictions and opioid drug overdoses within the U.S. Some states, such as New Hampshire, have seen a rapid increase in opioid related deaths and this skyrocketing surge brought heroin overdoses into focus during the recent presidential primaries. Opioid deaths occur in people from all socioeconomic, racial, age and gender groups.

Heroin is an illicit form of an opioid. When street heroin is combined with an even more potent drug called Fentanyl to enhance its effects, the combination is deadly. Other licit or prescribed opioids used for pain relief include oxycodone, hydrocodone, codeine and morphine.

According to Health and Human Services (<https://www.hhs.gov/opioids/>) published data from June 2016, "on an average day in the U.S. more than 650,000 opioid prescriptions are dispensed... 580 people initiate heroin use...The economic impact of the opioid epidemic is \$55 billion in health and social costs related to prescription opioid abuse each year."

The New York Times reports (1/7/2016) "Deaths from drug overdoses have jumped in nearly every county in the United States, driven largely by an explosion in addiction to prescription pain killers and heroin."

American Society of Addiction Medicine 2016 facts and figures concludes that, "Of the 20.5 million Americans 12 or older that had a substance use disorder in 2015, 2 million had a substance use disorder involving prescription pain relievers and 591,000 had a substance use disorder involving heroin."

Many of us knows or knows of a person who is struggling with drug addiction. Join us on February 15 at the Mobile Marriott to learn more about this this difficult to overcome and too often stigmatized behavioral/mental health topic.

## Nominations Being Accepted for Outstanding LWVM Members



At the LWVM annual meeting, members are recognized for jobs well done in the many and varied activities of the League.

In addition, one person is awarded the Legacy Banner Award. This award spotlights a member for any of a variety of reasons. For example, for having long, sustained loyalty to the League; for developing innovative projects for the League; for being unsung heroes who have worked tirelessly in jobs that do not always receive recognition. In other words, recognizing individuals who wave the League banner proudly by just being who they are and doing what they do best. The recipient's name is embroidered on the Legacy Banner.

The Awards Committee is soliciting suggestions from the membership for these awards. Please send your nominations to the committee within the next two months.

Donna Rogers (dgrog44@att.net)  
Beth Hardaway (bhardaway@southalabama.edu)  
Awards Committee Co-Chairs

### HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

- CONSIDER THE SOURCE**  
Click away from the story to investigate the site, its mission and its contact info.
- READ BEYOND**  
Headlines can be outrageous in effort to get clicks. What's the whole story?
- CHECK THE AUTHOR**  
Do a quick search on the author. Are they credible? Are they real?
- SUPPORTING SOURCES?**  
Click on those links. Determine if the info given actually supports the story.
- CHECK THE DATE**  
Reposting old news stories doesn't mean they're relevant to current events.
- IS IT A JOKE?**  
If it is too outlandish, it might be satire. Research the site and author to be sure.
- CHECK YOUR BIASES**  
Consider if your own beliefs could affect your judgement.
- ASK THE EXPERTS**  
Ask a librarian, or consult a fact-checking site.

IFLA  
International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

## LWVUS is Partner of National Women's March on Washington

Several members of LWVUS participated in the National Women's March in Pensacola and Mobile on January 21, 2017. The League of Women Voters US voted unanimously to be an official partner of the march. The goal was to "stand together in solidarity with our partners and children for the protection of our rights, safety, health, and families recognizing that our vibrant and diverse communities are the strength of our country".

“We march to reform money in politics. We march for health care. We march for the environment. These are our core issues and we want to ensure they are front and center,” LWVUS said in a January 11 missive to its members.



# 25 ways to be politically active (whether you lean left or right)

By AJ Willingham, CNN

(CNN)Whether the beginning of a new administration has you feeling impotent or energized, now's the time to start getting more politically active.

We have already seen some major stirrings -- Hundreds of thousands of people rallied around the country for the Women's March, and thousands more are expected in the nation's capital for the annual anti-abortion March for Life. And obviously, hundreds of thousands turned up to support the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

Keep the momentum going. Here are 25 ways you can elevate your activism:

## 1. Know who your local legislators and politicians are

[Here's where to find your House Representative.](#)

[Put your address in here to find a full list of your elected officials.](#)

## 2. Know how to get in touch with them (and actually make them listen.)

Here's [a great Twitter thread from a former Congressional staffer](#) about how to actually get politicians to listen (your phone is your best ally).

[Here are some general guidelines on how to contact them.](#)

## 3. Identify an issue you care about and pursue it

Hopefully you don't need too many resources on this, [though here's a good list of social issues](#) to get you started.

## 4. Attend town hall meetings

A town hall is where you, in person, can make your actual voice heard, in front of local politicians who can actually do something about it. Your congressperson will usually have a schedule of Town Hall meetings on their website, or you can check out your city's website as well.

## 5. Attend City Council meetings

Alternately, attend a City Council meeting to get an up-close view of what's important to your city's legislators.

## 6. Get to know your local School Board

If you have kids in school, you probably need to know about your school board. Here's everything [about what a school board does](#) and how you can get involved.

## 7. Join your local PTA

Not only can you have a direct communication with your school, you can also volunteer and participate in other ways that directly impact your community. [Here's how \(and why\) to join.](#)

## 8. Mobilize more people to support your cause

You alone are great and awesome and boy, can you make a difference. Now imagine, a dozen more of you. Get a group together to do any of the above things; attend meetings or join an association, and your cause will be magnified.

## 9. Join a voting league or political organization

A non-partisan group like the [League of Women Voters](#) is a good way to get informed, or you can choose a political group that aligns with your values.

## 10. Register to act on behalf of a political party.

[Here's a starting place for Republicans.](#) [Here's one for Democrats.](#) Keep in mind your party has a state chapter, too. Not feeling the bipartisan vibe? [Here's a full list of established political parties](#), along with their missions and contact information.

### **11. Join a campaign**

If you find a local politician who represents the change you want to see in your community, contact their office to figure out how you can get involved in the campaign! Maybe they'll have you stuff mailers or put up signs or some other boring task, but the boring tasks is what actually gets stuff done.

### **12. Volunteer at their headquarters**

Like we said, your state, city and county have party headquarters that are just waiting for your time and energy. Just give it a Google. They WANT you to help out, so it's not that hard to find. If you'd rather stay at home, you can most likely take part in digital activism: Sending newsletters or text messages or organizing online campaigns.

### **13. Attend or organize rallies and events**

Just make sure you're safe and lawful. Alternately, there are always political talks and events going on, probably in your area. [Look them up here.](#)

### **14. Pound the pavement**

If you want to influence people, you're going to have to actually go out and, you know, MEET the people you want to influence. [Here's a good article from the New York Times](#) on why this method actually works.

### **15. Volunteer to work at a polling place**

To start, you can get registered on the [Election Assistance Commission's website.](#)

### **16. Volunteer to register voters**

[Here are some openings for voter registration drives.](#) If you can't find what you're looking for, simple search for your city and state, along with "voter registration drive."

### **17. Vote**

[Make sure you're registered.](#) And do it in every election, not just the big ones.

### **18. Subscribe to a paper or other publication you believe in**

If you're unhappy with journalism or media coverage, find a publication that represents good journalism to you. Click on it often. Pay for a subscription. Support it any way you can.

### **19. Read up on American history and civics**

[USA.gov is your best friend.](#) There's history and civics there, but it's just the beginning. Here's a link to the [National Constitution Center](#) where you can read a word-for-word breakdown of the document. [Here's a link to the American History section of the Library of Congress.](#) Go crazy.

### **20. Share that knowledge**

Have discussions with your friends and family. Engage in respectful debate when appropriate (and no, that doesn't mean on Facebook timelines). Spread the word.

### **21. Volunteer at a place that benefits your community**

Ideally, you can align your volunteer work with your most important causes. Volunteer at church, at the local VA hospital, at a homeless shelter or at a school. The possibilities are endless, [but this website is a good place to start.](#)

### **22. Volunteer at a museum, state or national park, cultural center or historical society**

Volunteering isn't just about serving others, it's also about making sure the organizations that are important to you can continue to serve others.

### **23. GO to a museum, state or national park, or historical society**

SUPPORT. EDUCATION. IN ALL. FORMS.

### **24. Donate**

At the very least, let your wallet do the talking. If you're looking at a specific charity, check [Charity Watch](#) to make sure your money is being well-used.

### **25. Get off the internet**

Complaining on social media only gets you so far. Get out, meet people, use your hands and your time.