



# The Voter

February, 2018

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## Letter from the President

*"I always feel the movement is a sort of mosaic.  
Each of us puts in one little stone, and then you get a great mosaic at the end."  
Suffragist Alice Paul (1885-1977)*

February is a special month in the history of the League of Women Voters. February 14, 1920, the League was born. The organization emerged from the suffragist movement during the period between the time the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, granting women the right to vote, was passed by Congress (1919) and became a part of the Constitution (August 1920).

The movement itself was quite extraordinary. Seventy two years in the making. The history books mention only a handful of the names of the more than five million women from every state, creed, race and nationality who fought to win women the right to vote. With the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, these suffragists had, in the words of author Eleanor Clift, "engineered the greatest expansion of democracy on a single day the world has ever seen."

Against this background, the League was formed as a great experiment to assist these newly enfranchised women fulfill their responsibilities as voters. A daunting mission of making democracy work. And here we are, almost 100 years later, in 700 plus local and state leagues and at the national level, still carrying on that vision.

As we celebrate the League's 98<sup>th</sup> birthday, February is a good time to remind ourselves of the League's mission and why we are here. I am so grateful for the many talented and dedicated women and men who are a part of the work of the League of Women Voters of Mobile. The time and energy you contribute matters - whether, for example, registering a voter, inviting a friend to one of our educational programs, participating in Vote 18, Vote 411, Observer Corps, chairing or serving on a committee, or making a donation to support our work. In whatever way we choose to be a part of the League, each of us is putting another little stone in that great mosaic of our democracy, and making it work.

In League,

*Mary Anne Wilson, President*

## LWVM Officers & Directors

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Mary Anne Wilson

VP/Programs  
Rose Johnson

VP/Membership  
Beth Hardaway

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Mary Ann Merchant

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Cora Cade Lemmon  
Joan McCracken

Betsey Wooten, ex-officio

## 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. The February lunch will be at the Ben May Main Library Meeting Room.

**MONTHLY STUDY GROUP** ó Please join us for our study group sessions. Study group is not only enlightening and informative but also quite enjoyable. We begin with appetizers and light conversation.

**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 15 – 5:30 p.m. - LWVM Board Meeting** – Via!, 1717 Dauphin Street.

**February 18– 3:00-5:00 p.m. – Study Group** ó at the home of Jane Gordon as we begin our study on Making Democracy Work, Voting 101. Call Jane at 251-662-3386 for more information.

**February 21 – 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. – Lunch with the League – Ben May Main Library Meeting Room.** Featured speaker is Mobile County Probate Court Judge Don Davis on elections and the role of the Probate Court. We will be going to a õbrown bagö style lunch, and we will offer an option to order a box lunch from Jason's Deli or you can bring your own. Price for box lunch will be \$10 (cash or check, \$11 for credit card), which includes delivery. Orders for box lunch must be received no later than **Monday, February 19**. Check FB and website for further details. Reservations are requested so we can be sure to arrange enough seating. Contact Jane Gordon to rsvp and if you are interested in ordering a box lunch (251-662-3386 or lovjan42@comcast.net)

**March 11 – 3:00-5:00 – Study Group** – topic to be determined

**March 21 - 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. – Lunch with the League** – speaker and location to be determined.

**April 25 – 6:00 p.m. – LWVM Annual Meeting** - location to be determined.

Check the website calendar and Facebook for event updates.



## 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 in government and influences policy through education and advocacy*

## Program Update

By: Rose Johnson

Our study group begins covering the topic "Making Democracy Work" in February. We will start with Voting 101 on February 18 from 3:00-5:00 p.m. at the home of Jane Gordon. We will study the LWV IMPACT ON ISSUES (A Guide to Public Policy Positions) statement on voting rights and review registration requirements and our local league activities in voter registration. We are now meeting on Sunday afternoons instead of the second Monday of the month and invite you to join us.

Mobile Probate Judge Don Davis will be our February 21 luncheon on the topic of elections and the role of Probate Court. Our March luncheon speaker is to be determined. Dr. Patricia Harrison, Spring Hill College, will be our May luncheon speaker, bringing us information about the history of the suffragette movement in Britain and how it informed the U.S. movement.

For further information, consult LWV Mobile's website calendar or contact Rose Johnson, Program Chair at [frjohn2@bellsouth.net](mailto:frjohn2@bellsouth.net).

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## LWV Concludes its Study on the Coastal Impact of Climate Change

By: Renee Collini

This January we wrapped up our program on "Climate Change in Mobile County" with information about what we can do as individuals to combat climate change. This program has covered a great many expected impacts in Mobile County. The lunch series kicked off with a Climate 101 course where we learned about the basics of climate change, what some of the overarching impacts are, and what we have already seen and can expect locally. The next month we got specifics on a big topic "sea-level rise." A panel of speakers came to discuss the basics of sea-level rise, how it will impact storm surge and natural systems, and how communities can be impacted by and are addressing sea-level rise already. In November we heard from two experts on how changes in temperature and precipitation might impact our county. The first spoke on how changing temperatures will change the range and survivorship of insects like mosquitos that carry diseases. The second discussed how important precipitation is to Mobile County, not only locally, but across the entire region as it can dramatically change the ecosystems that are such a strong foundation for Mobile County.

The final speaker was Mikaela Heming of the Northern Gulf of Mexico Sentinel Site Cooperative and the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Ms. Heming gave an engaging presentation on *Drawdown*, a book that synthesizes the top 100 actions that can combat climate change. Specifically, Ms. Heming provided information and guidance on 15 actions that individuals in Mobile County could undertake. For each action, there was information on the rationale for how it helps, the benefits to reducing carbon, additional benefits, and resources for completing the action in Mobile. Among the actions she discussed were rooftop solar, plant-rich diet, reduced food waste, electric vehicles, ride sharing, food composting, household recycling and smart thermostats.

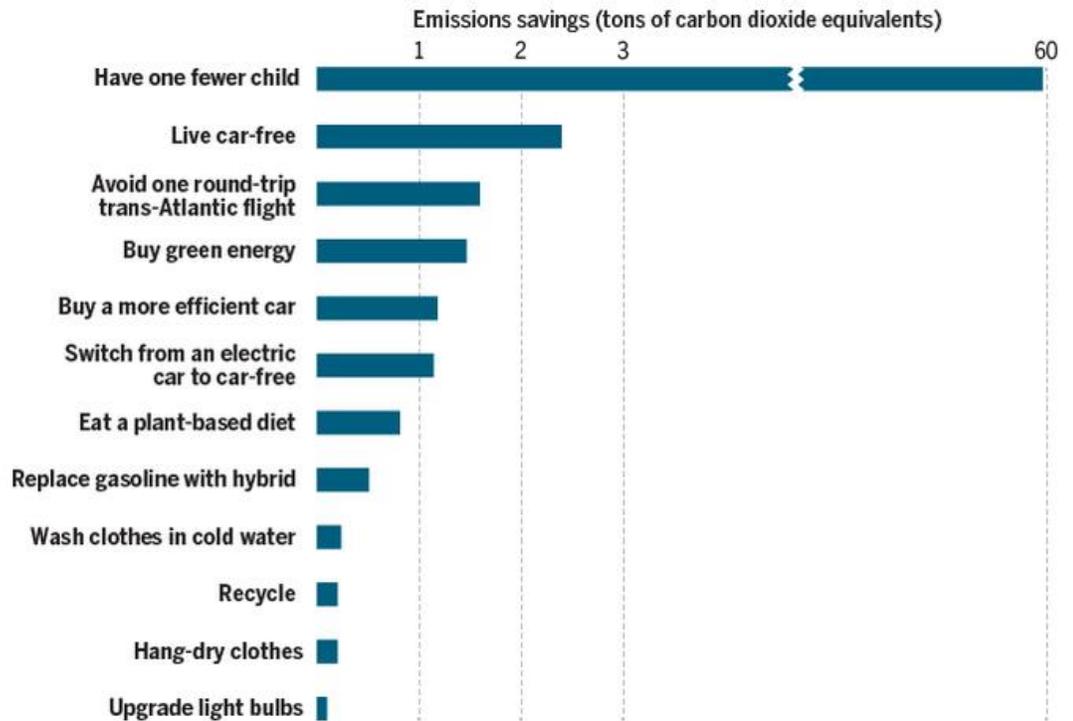
Many of these actions are easy to accomplish and save the average consumer money! We learned a lot and had plenty of time to ask Ms. Heming questions. Her power point is online, and you can learn more about these actions at [www.drawdown.org](http://www.drawdown.org) or purchase the book.

# Individual Choices for Environmental Sustainability

By: Lella Lowe

The Mobile League has studied climate change issues for many months, and (I think that I am speaking for most of us) we have been impressed, and perhaps overwhelmed, by the sheer immensity of the climate challenges facing us, so that we often feel that nothing we do individually can have any measurable impact on environmental sustainability. Indeed, when we consider that the primary focus for individuals for the past few decades has been on efforts such as recycling, changing light bulbs and lowering/raising thermostats, then it is easy to conclude that none of this will really amount to a drop in the bucket that is climate change. Efforts such as taking shorter showers and turning off lights when you leave a room are only common sense, but they really are the “low hanging fruit” on the environmental tree. We must realize that there comes a time when we must strive to do what is right, even though it may be very difficult, inconvenient, distasteful, not “fair,” or disruptive to our lifestyles.

A report published in the journal *Environmental Research Letters* on July 12, 2017 suggests that the most effective actions that individuals can take to reduce their greenhouse gas emission are not being promoted by governments and schools. According to this study, “the four actions that most substantially decrease an individual's carbon footprint are: **eating a plant-based diet, avoiding air travel, living car-free, and having smaller families.**” (Read more at: <https://phys.org/news/2017-07-effective-individual-tackle-climate-discussed.html#jCp>)



It is worth noting how intrusive many of these suggestions are within the normal framework of an American lifestyle. I imagine that the general reaction to most of these suggestions would be along the lines of “nobody can tell me how many children I can have,” and “I am free to eat whatever I want” I earned it and I can buy it,” and “I can travel anywhere I want, using whatever means I choose!”

There are a number of other significant actions that can be taken by individuals that are not listed in this report, including:

- Understand that purchasing is always a moral, and not simply an economic act. It is time to change the messaging delivered by our capitalist economy and stop buying more and more stuff that we simply don't need.
- Aim for a zero-waste culture. If we consume less, there is less to throw away. Cook food from scratch and avoid the over-packaging that has become so common in our prepared food systems. Strive to eat all of the food that we actually buy; Americans throw away between 31-40% of our after-harvest food, and yet people in this country are food insecure.
- For many people, air travel is one of their most serious environmental sins. Alternatives include vacationing close to home, teleconferencing, and renting an electric car and driving to your destination.
- Lobby for public transit, and then USE IT!
- Divest personal accounts from fossil fuels; use fossil-free and green-index funds. Stop using banks that are major funders of large fossil fuel projects.
- Encourage religious leaders to make the environment a priority for their followers. The Rev. Dr. Jim Antal, president of the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ, lays out what he believes is at stake for religious leaders. "If every third sermon isn't about climate change now," he tells them, "then within 15 years every sermon will be about grief."

Most of these suggestions are very personal and demand a fairly large commitment to reorienting ourselves and making choices that are right for the planet. In fact, the simplest way to look at the inevitable choices we must make for the planet is to see ourselves in right relationship with all of creation. We are not lords over creation, nor are we managers of creation, but we are simply a part of creation. As such, all of our actions affect the intricate web of life of which we are a part. I find meaningful a comment made by John Seed, founder and director of the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia. When asked how he deals with the despair resulting from struggling against lumber interests and politicians to save the rainforest, Seed answered:

"I try to remember that it's not me, John Seed, trying to protect the rainforest. Rather, I am part of the rainforest protecting itself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into human thinking."

I encourage us to embrace that approach to membership in the Earth community, and then reconsider lifestyle decisions that we make day-to-day.

## Welcome New Members!

**Luke Adams, Celia Baehr, Marthajane Cassidey, Lois Eastman, Shirley Eiland, Aisling Finnegan, Belinda Harris, Ricia Hendrick, Bonney Irwin, Celia Lewis, Erin Reimer, Connie Shebs, Dustye Sheffer, and Caroline Wilson**

**Past members returning: Beth Atkinson, Wanda Cochran, Sujin Kim, and Elaine Williams.**

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## Vote 18 Update

By: Myra Evans



**Vote 18** is getting busy again! Thank you to the teams that stepped up to ensure all the last-minute classes of seniors were registered and could participate in the Senatorial Special Election in December.

It is the beginning of a new semester and new opportunities are waiting! We need your help again. We have already scheduled Bryant High School's time to get to work on the other MCPSS locations. There is a big primary coming in early June and we hope to have all eligible 18 year olds ready, registered and excited. We would ideally like to be in all the high schools in the county - public and private. Any help you can provide to open the door and get a contact

would really be appreciated. Please email [leagueofwomensvotersmobile@gmail.com](mailto:leagueofwomensvotersmobile@gmail.com) with the contact information.

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## Membership News

By Beth Hardaway



As the dues renewal period for the League came to an end for 2017-18, the Mobile League reached a milestone. Our membership has grown to the point that our League is entitled to three voting delegates at the national convention this summer, rather than the two delegates allowed previously. When our dues paid up membership passed the 100 mark, the third delegate became possible. At press time, the League membership stood at 110, with 17 new members added since dues collection began September 1, 2017.

The Membership Committee, ably chaired by Julie Castle and assisted by members Jaclyn Bunch, Queen Daniels, Cora Cade Lemmon, Bobba Turley and myself, hosted a new member orientation at the Ben May Library on November 6. Dr. Bunch led the group in an "icebreaker," designed to help everyone become acquainted, and news and information

about the League was provided by President Mary Anne Wilson and various committee chairpersons. The committee plans another new member orientation in late spring.

## Nominating Committee Update

By: Suzanne Schwartz

Spring is just around the corner - and so is the Annual Meeting of the League of Women Voters of Mobile. At this annual meeting, the membership is tasked with electing the new members to our leadership team.

We are truly blessed with some of the smartest, most dedicated and hardest working men and women in Mobile. If you know of anyone you think would be a great member of the leadership team, please nominate them for one of our upcoming vacancies. If you would like to be considered for a leadership position, by all means let the committee know of your interest.

The Nominations Committee is chaired by Suzanne Schwartz (smorey.schwartz@gmail.com). Andrea Pennington (appreferee@hotmail.com) and Amanda Jones (amandajones56@gmail.com) are committee members. Please drop any of us an email making a recommendation. Every individual will be contacted and interviewed by the Committee.

We are growing as an organization demanding our continued commitment to maintaining our strong history of excellent leadership. Leading with intent requires diversity, inclusion and equality in the composition of our leadership team - for ourselves and for the goals of the League of Women Voters.



*The League of Women Voters Making Democracy Work! League Members Barbara Caddell, Betty Shinn and Rose Johnson registered voters at the Women's March in Mobile on January 19.*

## LWV's Position on Voting

At our last annual meeting, the membership of the League of Women Voters of Mobile voted to study two topics for the 2018 program year. We recently concluded our study of the coastal impact of climate change and had some exceptional speakers and discussions about this topic. Now we will begin focusing on voting rights and voter suppression.

The League of Women Voters believes that voting is a fundamental right and all eligible voters should have the equal opportunity to exercise that right. We are dedicated to ensuring that our elections remain free, fair and accessible. For nearly 100 years, we have fought to protect the rights of eligible voters and expand access for those who've been left out of our democratic process. Our volunteers spearhead efforts to enact common-sense voting reforms and we are the first to fight back when voters' rights are threatened. We protect millions of voters every year through aggressive advocacy and education efforts and we have been at the forefront of major voting rights court cases over the last decade.

The League's priorities are:

- Expanding Voter Access - We fight to increase voters' access to the polls, including expanding early voting, automatic and online voter registration.
- Redistricting - Congressional districts and government legislative bodies should be apportioned substantially on population. We oppose partisan and racial gerrymandering that strips rights away from voters.
- Money in Politics - Elections should be about the voters not big money interests. We believe in limiting SuperPACs and secret donors to protect representative democracy.
- Fighting Voter Suppression - We challenge all efforts and tactics that threaten our democracy and limit the ability of voters to exercise their right to vote.

Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League upon the belief that the vote is the emblem of equality. That's why our work today is dedicated to ensuring that all eligible voters - particularly those from traditionally underrepresented or underserved communities, including first-time voters, new citizens, minorities and low-income Americans - have the opportunity and the information to exercise their right to vote. Be a better informed citizen by joining us as we study this important subject.

*“Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education.”*

*-- Franklin D. Roosevelt*

# Save the Date! Saturday, April 14, 2018



The League of Women Voters of Alabama Council 2018 is coming to Birmingham!

The Birmingham League will host the 2018 LWVAL

Council on Saturday, April 14, 2018. League members from across Alabama are invited to Birmingham on that day to conduct council business, discuss important Alabama issues, and work to advance our League's mission. We look forward to welcoming League members and their guests. Plan on coming the day before to fully enjoy the Magic City and some warm southern hospitality! Details soon!

## 9 TIPS FOR LIVING WITH LESS PLASTIC

-  1 Bring your own shopping bag
-  2 Carry a reusable water bottle
-  3 Bring your own cup
-  4 Pack your lunch in reusable containers
-  5 Say no to disposable straws & cutlery
-  6 Skip the plastic produce bags
-  7 Slow down and dine in
-  8 Store leftovers in glass jars
-  9 Share these tips with your friends

**LESS PLASTIC.** #REFUSE SINGLE USE #CHOOSE REUSABLES

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