



The Mobile Voter



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

WINTER ACTIVITIES

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 on Bel Air Boulevard. The buffet lunch is **\$17.00**. RSVP to (251) 402-3321 or lovjan42@comcast.net.

MONTHLY STUDY GROUP ó In-depth objective study of a selected issue held on the **second Monday** of the month from 5:30-7:00 p.m. at the home of Jane Gordon, 2116 Sheffield Ct., Mobile 36693, 251-402-3321. Light refreshments served.

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

December 13, 2015 – 4:00 p.m. – League of Women Voters of Mobile’s Annual Holiday Christmas Party at the home of Anne Walsh, 3709 Tudor Lane, Mobile, 36608 (neighborhood behind St. Ignatius Catholic Church on Springhill Avenue). Feel free to bring a guest and a finger food! If you need directions, call Anne at 251-343-5056 or 251-401-1702.

January 11, 2016 ó 5:30 p.m. - Study Group meets to study the court system, prison system, and alternatives to incarceration in Alabama. There has been a lot of attention on the low quality of the state of Alabama’s prisons which has led to discussions regarding budgets, minimum standards, overcrowding, alternatives to incarceration, required minimum sentences, and other topics regarding the prison and court systems and the interactions between them. Study groups are held at the home of Jane Gordon, 2116 Sheffield Court.

January 12 6:30 p.m., LWVM Board Meeting ó VIA Center, 1717 Dauphin Street.

January 20 ó 11:30 ó first Lunch with the League at the Marriott Hotel on Bel Air Boulevard. Speaker to be announced.

Letter from the President



Holiday Greetings League Members,

During the past three months, so many signs of enthusiastic member participation have been shown—members actively engaging in studying the focus of money in politics— from different perspectives, members reaching out to new prospective members in new and expansive ways. The Observer Corps has started developing a complete renewal of its organization and reporting with the new goal of compiling data to be shared with the city. There was continuing work on behalf of voter registration and also teaching high school students about their right to vote at 18 years of age. Everyone should be patting themselves on the back for such a significant impact they are having on our city!

I think the most important aspect of the League to me is that we always stress the non-partisan character of the state, local, and national league, and when we approach any study issue, we are always careful to represent views from many different perspectives on the same issue before trying to reach a consensus. This is important in our effort to reach out to new members, showing respect for all views. It is also a formidable and admirable undertaking!

I thank all of you for this great important work, and my hope is that this spirit of cooperation will be noticed by all new people from our city who are becoming aware of this civic organization— started by women and now include both genders.

We will be having our next League luncheon at the Marriott Hotel on Bel Air Boulevard on January 20, 2016, with our first speaker talking on the subject of prison reform. Anyone wishing to join the study group focusing on this issue, please plan to be at Jane Gordon's home at 5:30 p.m. on January 11 (2116 Sheffield Court, Mobile, 36693). We meet there on the second Monday of each month.

Remember to join us this Sunday, December 13, for our annual holiday party at the home of Anne and David Walsh, 3709 Tudor Lane, Mobile, 36608. If you like, bring a guest and some finger food to share.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas celebration and a happy holiday time.

Betsy Wooten, President
League of Women Voters of Mobile

Welcome New Members!

Judy Aronson
Latisha Colvin
Amanda Jones
Betsy Long
Stephanie Robinson

Welcome back to prior members:
Carol Norris and Carol Parker

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

By Betty Shinn

The League of Women Voters Mobile Rock! At this year's National Voter Registration Day in September a total of nine League members and four volunteers joined us in the Atrium at Government Plaza for voter registration. Additionally, voter registration took place using Vote 18 at Murphy High School. We also had a League Board member, our Parliamentarian Charletta House, working with her sorority, the Deltas, and the NAACP to help drive up voter registration in Mobile. Myra Evans with Vote 18 reported that she, along with Lella Lowe and Holly Wiseman performed Vote 18 for six different classes at Murphy High School and had an impressive 88 voter registrants. I can't stop smiling and I couldn't be more pleased.

Our efforts produced over 30 people completing voter registration forms in Government Plaza. We received words of appreciation and encouragement for our efforts from elected officials. Mayor Stimpson and Councilmembers, County Commissioners, attorneys and city workers all stopped by to thank the League for taking time to help employees and citizens to register to vote or to update their voter registration information.

We met a lady who told us that when she was a teenager, she waited anxiously to become a senior so she could register to vote. For some reason, whoever did the voter registration did not come to the school her senior year and she never registered. When we asked her if she was registered, she decided it was past time and sat down and completed her application. These are the stories that serve as inspiration to us as we go about our work of getting citizens registered to vote.

We heard all kinds of stories and met people from all walks of life, every socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and racial background. I love seeing people excited about making a difference and understanding the power of every vote, every election.

I'd like to personally thank every League member who participated in any way to represent LWVM as we surpassed our goal again this year. As we prepare for the 2016 election cycle, we know that our work isn't finished--we're just beginning with the focus and attention on young voters. Studies show that when 18 year olds vote, they can be counted on to vote for the rest of their life.

Additionally, I am seeking out opportunities to reach disenfranchised voters. I'm thankful for Kenyen Brown, U.S. Attorney General, and the Re-Entry program which allows us opportunities to help ex-offenders obtain or regain voting rights.

It was an honor to serve as the coordinator of National Voter Registration Day. Many thanks to Ken Kronebusch, who was joined by Frank Barragan, South Alabama Regional Organizer at the Alabama Coalition for Immigrant Justice, June Jones, Betty Jones, Chenele Chapman, Myra Evans, Lella Lowe, Holly Wiseman and everyone who participated. Together we helped to make National Voter Registration Day successful by helping people register to vote.



Betty Jones, Betty Shinn and President Betsey Wooten in Government Plaza

Statewide registrations:

LWV Greater Tuscaloosa - 130

LWV Baldwin County - 111

LWV East Alabama - 80

LWV :Mobile - 466

LWV Greater Birmingham -

This was a total of 864 new registrations state-wide!

Membership Committee News

Hard-working committee members Julie Castle, Linda Langan and Cora Cade Lemmon are responsible for preparing prospective member and new member information packets, making personal contacts with new members and recruiting new members. Be sure to read the report by Linda Langan below about her extensive efforts in engaging a younger age group from local colleges. Our committee also welcomes a new member, Amanda Jones, who will assist with fund-raising ideas.

The Mobile League continues to grow, both in total numbers and in the areas of activity the League is pursuing. Current membership stands at 113. Of that number, 80 members have paid dues for the 2015-16 year ..which means that around 30 members are not current with dues. If you are not sure of your dues status, please email me at bhardaway@southalabama.edu.

REMINDER: YOU CAN RENEW MEMBERSHIP ONLINE USING YOUR CREDIT CARD OR PAYPAL ACCOUNT BY GOING TO: lwvmobile.org

New LWVM Membership and Recruitment Efforts



By Linda Langan

During recent months members of the LWVM have been in communication with professors at the University of South Alabama (USA). These efforts have been geared towards getting to know the young people within our local college community. Our objective has been to educate these college students about the historical and present day work the League performs to help strengthen democracy both locally and nationally. The South Alabama faculty members that we have met with have provided us with ideas that will appeal to their students. We are very grateful to each of these professors for finding time in their busy work schedules to meet with us and to advise us. As a result of these contacts, members of the LWVM were invited to be guest speakers and to present our ideas to students in various politically oriented classes. We anticipate making additional classroom presentations at South Alabama in 2016.

Currently the LWVM members represent people who belong to the Silent, Baby Boomers and Gen X generations. We have very few members from our society's generational group known as Millennials, otherwise known as GenY or Net Generation. Millennials are today's young adults and they precede our youngest generation named Gen Z or iGen.

Millenials tend to think differently than earlier generations. For example, they are very tech savvy and are frequent users of many forms of social media. As a group they are well educated, confident and are focused on their own personal goals. They are more aware of resume building at a younger age. The LWVM needs to reach out to these students in an effort to get them to actively participate in our organization. Even if our efforts are not rewarded by their joining our organization now, the outreach efforts may result in them joining the League later in their lives.

If you are interested in participating in this new and exciting program, please contact me at lindam.langan@gmail.com



Observer Corps Update

By: Mary Anne Wilson

Currently members of the League of Women Voters of Mobile (LWVM) attend local government meetings as part of the Observer Corps. These scheduled meetings are local government groups or boards and are led by people who have been appointed by our elected officials, including the Mayor, to represent the citizens of Mobile County. Observer Corps are LWVM members and friends who volunteer and attend scheduled local government meetings. They serve our community by listening and observing what takes place.

Due to the sheer number of government boards that exist, there is a need to actively recruit additional members and friends of the LWVM to volunteer and to serve in this vital program. As the LWVM membership numbers continue to grow, there is a possibility that some new members or even longer term members of our organization are unaware of our ongoing Observer Corps program.

The Observer Corps presence at these government meetings is a very important one. Not only is the LWV presence becoming increasingly recognized and accepted because of the efforts of past members, but there are many additional effects that our Observer Corps members provide. Our presence serve to remind local officials that their decisions and actions are being noticed, particularly the goals of transparency within our local government and the protection of a citizen's right to know. The brief notes that form a short report help the LWVM membership understand decisions that were made and how they were made. In this way, the LWVM membership is kept abreast of issues facing our community and thereby enabling our leaders, if warranted, to take appropriate action.

We have an extensive list of local government boards that schedule meetings on a regular basis. I know that you will find a board that appeals to your interests. There are five local boards that are of particular interest to our organization, and your attendance at one or more of these meetings is most welcomed.

It is always more enjoyable to go with a friend or a fellow member, either one you already know or are open to getting to know. Should you need any assistance in locating LWVM members who share the same board interests as you or even a LWVM member who you could accompany to a board meeting, let us know and every attempt will be made toward making this happen. Just know that your participation is the key to our Observer Corps program's success.

An orientation meeting for current Observers and LWV members interested in the OC is being planned for some time in January. To learn more or to join our Observer Corps, contact me at hallwils@aol.com or Carol Adams-Davis at mcadamsdavis@earthlink.net

IN MEMORIAM

Martha Collier, a long-time LWVM member and Observer Corps Chair, passed away on November 14 after a long battle with breast cancer. We extend heartfelt condolences to her husband, Bobby, and her entire family. She will be greatly missed.



Vote 18 Update -

By: Myra Evans

We continue to present, inspire (we hope) and register high school students with our award-winning program, Vote 18. For our new members, Vote 18 is a fun, interactive 45-minute program that helps new and prospective voters understand the value of their vote, encourages them to register, go to the polls and get involved in their communities. Vote 18 takes the form of a fun, fast-paced interactive game. It covers the history of voting, explains how that is relevant to the lives we are living today.

What makes Vote 18 so effective is the interactive teaching style and role-playing technique. During one class period the leader 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.

Our Vote 18 team of Lella Lowe, Barbara Caddell, Andrea Pennington, June Jones and Myra Evans were recently joined by Bea Ishler (making her first appearance as King George!). The Team went to Murphy High School for National Voter Registration Day, as well as McGill Toolen High School and Williamson High School, yielding another 240 registrations! Some pictures are on our Facebook page.

We just learned that LWVM was awarded a pass-through grant of \$600 from the League of Women Voters Education Fund for Vote 18. Thanks to all who helped make this happen!

Please reach out to any high school groups you may have contact with and encourage them to invite us. We want to reach ALL of the schools in January before the primary registration window closes just after Mardi Gras.

If you have any other questions or want more information, please contact Myra Evans at bobalouiemom@yahoo.com.



Field Trip

Several League members journeyed to Daphne in November to join the Baldwin County League at their luncheon to hear Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill speak.

Merrill mentioned that the ability to register online in Alabama should happen soon. He also reviewed some of the changes to the voter registration form which seems to be very positive, and of course, he discussed the voter ID requirement. He stated that the state's closing of 31 county driver's license offices won't leave residents without a place to get the required I.D. card to vote. He

said state election officials will issue photo voter I.D. cards at county Board of Registrars offices. "Every county has a Board of Registrars," he said. An Alabama driver's license is the identification most people will use when they go to the polls, but he said that other forms of government issued identification will also work.

As was mentioned in the Mobile Press Register, he shared some of the background around the new posters he printed with the Alabama and Auburn football coaches as the models. The coaches are participating to promote voter registration and participation in the state of Alabama. During the football season, videos were played on the jumbotron at Jordan-Hare Stadiums and Bryant-Denny Stadium, as well as local and statewide television and radio stations.



League of Women Voters of Mobile

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