



# The Mobile Voter

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



## LWVM WINTER ACTIVITIES

### LWV of Mobile 2012-2013 Officers & Directors

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#### Hospitality

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#### Directors

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Barbara Caddell  
Martha Collier  
Jane Gordon  
Jay Higginbotham  
Mary McGinnis  
Andrea Pennington  
Barbara Cooper South

**LUNCH WITH THE LEAGUE** – 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 \$15.00. RSVP to 432-2492 or [lovjan42@comcast.net](mailto:lovjan42@comcast.net).

**MONTHLY STUDY GROUP** – 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, 662-3386. 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](mailto:bobalouiemom@yahoo.com) or 666-7914.

**January 16 – Lunch with the League**, 11:30 a.m., Marriott Hotel. Judy Haner of the Nature Conservancy will discuss results of recent economic studies showing the positive economic impact oyster-reef planting endeavors have brought to the Alabama Gulf coast.

**January 22 - LWV/Alabama Arise Legislative Forum** - 7:30 until 9:00 p.m. - Dauphinway United Methodist Church. Please bring finger food.

**January 28 - Evening Study Group** – Jane Gordon's Home – 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. We will work with Mitch Reid of the Alabama Rivers Alliance to develop a response to the draft of the state's comprehensive water management plan.

**January 29** – Senate 35 Election (see candidates on page 8)

**February 26** – House District 97 Election (see candidates on page 8)



## Co-President's Letter

Dear Friends,

I hope you enjoyed the many blessings of the holidays, especially time spent with family and friends and a break from the “every-day” world. Our house was full and busy for our sons both came home bringing friends. As we chatted at the dinner table, I was reminded of Gina’s piece last month describing her concern for her children’s political formation. My boys, who grew up holding the “stop” and “go” signs at LWV candidate forums, calling in election results to TV stations, and sharing their mom with the Mobile League, are interested in political issues and believe that they have a duty to vote and impact issues they care about. While we do not always agree on these issues, I am proud that they have learned that their opinions do matter and that they can have an effect on public policy. Gina has lots of these family discussions in her future!

More than at our dinner tables, issues of concern to the League are everywhere

- the upcoming special elections to fill two local legislative seats
- the controversy over transparency at the Public Service Commission(see Kathy Byrd’s letter on P 4)
- continuing scrutiny of our water quality
- the upcoming session of the Alabama Legislature
- the process of drafting a state water management plan
- municipal elections in Mobile

As you can see, our political “plate” is full. In addition to our usual voter education and registration activities, we will be embarking on an exciting new project that will help restore civil rights to persons who have served time in prison and fulfilled their obligations to society. We are also expanding the League’s message into various social network venues. I want to encourage each of you to find one of these issues that interests you and get involved. Volunteer to present Vote 18 or do other voter education/registration activities. Come to our luncheon or to our evening study group and learn more about our waters. Come to the legislative forum and get answers to your questions. And, above all, VOTE!

***Barbara Caddell, Co-President  
League of Women Voters of Mobile***



## Member Profile – Roslyn DeBellis



After having lived in New York all of my life, I arrived in Mobile in 1993. There was no need for a “period of adjustment.” My husband had been appointed to a new position, and we were looking for a “new adventure.” It turned out to be a new home.

When I moved to Mobile, I checked into RSVP (Retired Seniors Volunteer Program) and was given several suggestions for ways to get involved in my community, including the League of Women Voters. The League was very active in New York, but I had never joined because my concentration at the time was on my family, home, and career. Here, the LWVM was my opportunity to learn and get involved in my new community and participate in activities for its betterment, even if only in a small way. I have been a member since about 1993. Years ago, I served as Board Secretary. At the present time, I am an election reporter and a member of the Observer Corps. I enjoy attending the board meetings of the History Museum of Mobile and the Mobile Tree Commission.

From early childhood, I wanted to be a schoolteacher. In deciding my college concentration, I hedged and majored in Education-Accounting. I reasoned that if my teaching jobs were unavailable, I could turn to the business world. For three years, I did just that.

I started my chosen career as a high school teacher of business subjects then turned to guidance and counseling, followed by service as a high school assistant principal and finally a junior high school principal. After retirement, I taught for about a year as an adjunct at a business college.

I earned my BBA degree from the City College of New York. My master’s degrees in education and counseling are from the City College of New York and Fordham University, both earned after my children were born.

In addition to the LWV, my interests include being a parishioner of St. Dominic Church, docent at the Museum of Art, member of OdysseyUSA, the Christian-Jewish Dialogue, and the Schumann Club. I enjoy concerts, opera, theater, lectures, special civic events, and keeping with the local and world news.

I have traveled extensively here and abroad, especially before the loss of my husband. Now I go to New York and Connecticut to visit my children and their families. My grandchildren Amy, sixteen years old, and Christine, four years old, are the joy of my life.

**AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ALABAMA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONERS**

**Twinkle Andress Cavanaugh, President**

**Jeremy H. Oden**

**Terry Dunn**

**A CALL FOR TRANSPARENCY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The League of Women Voters of Alabama is a nonpartisan organization promoting active and informed citizen participation in government. We strongly support transparency in all levels and forms of government to provide citizens their rightful access to information regarding the formation of policies, ordinances, and other positions taken by our elected and appointed officials.

The LWVAL appreciates the role of the PSC in safeguarding Alabamians' interest in regulating our three investor-owned utilities. Our average residential electricity bills in 2011 were second only to Hawaii, and our natural gas prices were twice those in our similar sized neighboring states, Georgia and Mississippi.

Consumers served by our investor-owned utilities pay them a much higher profit for shareholders than the average allowed by PSCs in other states. Our regulated electricity and gas utilities are guaranteed between 13.0 and 14.5% return on common equity and have been since 1982, as other electric utilities' average returns have been lowered with the changing times – from 12.62% in 1990 to an average of 10.18% in 2012.

Several questions have been raised in the press recently regarding Alabama's higher natural gas transportation tariff charges, individual and business utility rates, and operation and maintenance expenditures as compared to our neighbors. These differences may be appropriate, but citizens of Alabama have no way of knowing.

Questions have also been raised regarding the accessibility of gas utility "books," and whether and by what means consumer involvement on a regular and formal, as well as informal, basis should be increased.

We commend Commissioner's Dunn's reported proposal that the Commission hold a formal public hearing on utility rates, ending the 30-year exclusion of interested parties from access to and involvement in decisions about our electricity and natural gas prices and plans. We urge the new Commission under President's Cavanaugh's leadership to choose to shine more light on the PSC process. You have the opportunity, if not the obligation, to improve Alabamians' accessibility and participation in utility planning and rate setting.

Finally, we encourage the PSC members and all Alabamians to participate in 2013 with the Energy Division of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs in developing our first comprehensive State Energy Plan.

On behalf of transparency and citizen participation,

Kathryn Byrd, President  
League of Women Voters of Alabama

You are invited to the second annual dialogue between South AL legislators and their constituents.

**Come join the conversation!**

Tuesday, January 22, 2013  
7:30 — 9:00 P.M.  
Dauphin Way United Methodist Church, McGowin Hall  
1507 Dauphin Street  
Mobile, AL 36604



Sponsored by South Alabama Arise members and the League of Women Voters of Mobile



For More Info Call: Arise (800) 832-9060 or LWV (251) 459-2267



## LWV Mobile and Mobile Public Library Form Partnership

The League of Women Voters of Mobile and the Mobile Public Library have joined forces to provide better voter services to Mobile citizens.

Voter registration stations have been set up near the library entrance. The voter registration stations include the registration forms in Plexiglas holders purchased by the League of Women Voters of Mobile, easel displays with upcoming election dates, registration deadlines, sample ballots, and information about Vote411.org.

These stations increase the visibility of these resources to the public who are just browsing – library patrons do not have to remember to request a registration form from the librarian but can see and get the information as they walk into the library. Previously, the Voter Registration forms were kept stacked behind the front desk and the library patrons had to ask for them or they checked a box on the library card registration form and were given one.

The library collects the completed registration forms and submits them to the Voter Registration office downtown, saving the patron a stamp. The Voter Registration office keeps track of how many forms come from the libraries so it is easy to get statistics on how many people are taking advantage of this service.

*Rachel Dudley,*  
LWV Mobile member

### Membership News

Thanks to you, 2012 was an excellent membership year for the Mobile League as we added 31 new members to our rolls! Current membership stands at 100. As usual, the excellent programs and “word of mouth” advertising by League members are responsible for this growth. The activities of the League are so varied and plentiful that there is something to interest every member. It is such a pleasure to see so many of our new members quickly becoming involved in these projects.

January of each year is the time when yours truly is required to update our membership roster with the national League. While 80% of our members have paid dues for 2012-13, the 20% who have yet to renew will be receiving a reminder email. If you wish to remain on active membership status with the League, you must pay 2012-13 dues during January.

If you have questions about dues/membership, or if you know of someone who may be interested in knowing more about the League, please email me at: [bhardaway@southalabama.edu](mailto:bhardaway@southalabama.edu). And thank you for making my job such an easy one!

**Beth Hardaway**



### **LWVM Members Tour Evonik**

As part of this year’s study “Healthy Waters. Healthy People. Healthy Economies,” a large delegation of League members toured Evonik in December to learn about their innovative wastewater treatment. Evonik’s plant in Mobile is the largest North American site. The 700 or so employees here produce hydrogen peroxide, fumed silica, and the animal feed additive methionine, among other chemicals.

Evonik is aware of the need to protect our fragile environment and has been recognized for its excellent clean water practices. Pretreatment prevents the introduction of harmful pollutants into the sewer system, which could negatively affect the sanitary sewer and its operations or pass through the treatment plant and contaminate the Gulf of Mexico. Members learned a lot and were treated to lunch by Evonik.

## Judy Haner of The Nature Conservancy to Speak at January's Lunch With the League



The Nature Conservancy's Judy Haner will be releasing the results of recent economic studies showing the positive economic impact oyster-reef planting endeavors have brought to the Alabama Gulf coast. Haner will be speaking at the monthly luncheon held by the League of Women Voters of Mobile, as part of its study, "Healthy Waters. Healthy People. Healthy Economies."

The reports link the restoration of sensitive and important coastal habitats to the economy. Some examples of economic benefits include increased value to waterfront properties, resulting from stabilized shorelines, and improved fishing for both commercial and recreational fishermen, resulting from the enhanced habitat that nurtures birds, juvenile fish and invertebrates.

The Nature Conservancy's 100-1000 project aims to restore coastal habitats and reverse years of damage caused by pollution, storms, development, and erosion.

Serving as Alabama's Marine Program Director for the Nature Conservancy, Haner was recently honored with the National Audubon Society's prestigious *Women in Conservation* award.

The public is invited to attend the luncheon, scheduled for Wednesday, January 16, 11:30-1:00 p.m., at Marriott Hotel near Bel Air Mall, 3101 Airport Blvd. The buffet lunch is \$15. Please RSVP to 432-2492 or lovjan42@comcast.net.



## ELECTION INFORMATION

**SPECIAL SENATE 35 REPUBLICAN PRIMARY ELECTION** is Jan. 29; Run-Off is March 12, and General Election will be April 23. If a run off is not needed, the General Election will move up to the March 12 date.

**CANDIDATES:**

Jim Barton  
[jbarton104@gmail.com](mailto:jbarton104@gmail.com)

Bill Hightower  
[hightower.bill@gmail.com](mailto:hightower.bill@gmail.com)

Nick Matranga  
[nmatranga@comcast.net](mailto:nmatranga@comcast.net)

**SPECIAL HOUSE 97 PRIMARY** is Feb. 26; Run-Off is April 9 and General will be May 21. If a run off is not needed, the General will move up to the April 9 date.

**CANDIDATES:**

William Carroll  
[Carrollwilliam8@gmail.com](mailto:Carrollwilliam8@gmail.com)

Adline C. Clarke  
[blackbkgft@aol.com](mailto:blackbkgft@aol.com)

Karlos Finley  
[Karlos@bfw-lawyers.com](mailto:Karlos@bfw-lawyers.com)

Jeffery Ray Jones  
[car1480@aol.com](mailto:car1480@aol.com)

Kimberly Williams Pettway  
[kpettway@gmail.com](mailto:kpettway@gmail.com)

Ronnie L. Williams  
[rwilliams@williams-llc.com](mailto:rwilliams@williams-llc.com)

Levi Wright, Jr.  
251-773-9459

## THE SOUTH IN FOCUS

Sponsored by the Southern Environmental Law Center

*Southern Exposure* is a new fellowship program created to raise awareness of important environmental issues in Alabama through documentary filmmaking. Produced by talented graduate-level students from across the US, the films cover topics ranging from fracking in the Talladega National Forest to air quality in Birmingham.

Jan. 30, 6 pm, Crescent Theater

Jan. 31, 7 pm, USA-Baldwin County Performance Center

Free Admission

For more info, visit

<http://www.southernenvironment.org/southinfoCUS>

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