



League of Women Voters of East Alabama

<http://lww-eastalabama.org/>

Save the Date:

- **Summer Social**
Monday, 7/22 @ 5:30PM
Zazu's on Magnolia
- **Social Media Workshop**
Saturday, 7/27 @ 1PM
660 East Lane, Auburn
- **Hot Topics Lunches**
Thursdays, 8/1 and 8/22
@ 11 am
Chappy's on Glenn
- **August Meeting**
Monday, 8/26 @ 6:30
First Baptist Church
128 E. Glenn Ave.
Use College St. Lot

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From the President: A Brand New Year

I am extremely excited to be the new President of the League of Women Voters of East Alabama (LWVEA)! Although we are halfway through 2013, now is when "our" year begins: the planning sessions, the discussions about topics and speakers, the agenda for what we want to accomplish in the next twelve months and how to get it done. We have great board members in place and each one is dedicated to making this a great year for the League.

Our main topic will be "The State of Education in Alabama" and the majority

of our programming will be connected to this theme. The passing of the Alabama Accountability Act (HB84) and the upcoming implementation of Common Core Standards are two areas of interest as are the proposed tax increases in the city of Auburn and unincorporated Lee County.

As always, our main goal is to encourage the informed and active participation of our members and the public. Therefore, plans are in the works to promote more time for discussion and

dialogue. In addition to our regular programming events, we have many social events planned including our Summer Social and Hot Topics Lunches (see calendar on Page 6) as well as several Voter Registration events. I am encouraging everyone to get involved with the LWVEA in any way you can. Feel free to contact me if you have any ideas or suggestions about making the LWVEA better!

Respectfully submitted,
Kristen De La Fuente
President-elect, LWVEA

Auburn University Held Naturalization Ceremony

Auburn University held its second naturalization ceremony for 40 new US citizens on May 7, 2013. Individuals from 27 different countries were represented in the auditorium at Foy Hall. Some traveled from as far away as Baldwin and DeKalb Counties to become citizens. The ceremony included a keynote address by guest speaker Dr. Fred Kam, a

naturalized citizen from Trinidad and Tobago, who touted the importance of exercising one's right to vote. After the ceremony Janet Clark, Neali Vann and Kristen De La Fuente from the League of Women Voters of East Alabama (LWVEA) were able to register 24 of the new citizens. Everyone was very excited to fill out the registration form and get their chance to vote in

the next election. The first question on the form reads "Are you a citizen of the United States of America?" The faces of these new citizens were beaming as they enthusiastically checked the "Yes" box. The LWVEA was proud to play a small part in starting these new citizens on the path to voting. We will plan to be there again next year.

Alabama State Convention - by Jan Widell and Janet Clark

LWVAL State convention topics included the state of healthcare in underserved populations, a look into the legislative process and developments in Alabama resources for energy and water.

The adventure began when four Leaguers drove to Tuscaloosa for the Convention. Charlotte Ward, Ruth Gynther, Janet Clark and Jan Widell met Laura Newland-Hill to begin the work of representing you. The Tuscaloosa League organized a tour of the new Federal Courthouse with an emphasis on the large murals depicting Alabama historical events. The murals surround the second floor balcony and the entrances to courtrooms and offices.

The first Plenary Session introduced the proposed program, budget, state board nominees and amendments of program, budget or bylaws for the next two years. Voting on these proposals occurs on the next day to allow for discussion and conversation about changes or proposals. The proposals included the re-adoption of League Principles and LWVAL Program on Education. The second proposal on the Health Care Study and consensus were passed with the recommendation of adoption of the position by the LWVAL. The third proposal was to continue the development of a Facts and Issues on Energy Use in Alabama with the effort to gain

consensus and adopt the position as appropriate by the LWVAL Board. Both of these proposals will allow for advocacy by the LWVAL. We also reviewed the status of the Education Fund which is a separate entity and requires separate votes.

We were challenged and informed by two speakers and a panel discussion. The first speaker was Dr. Leigh Ann Poole, professor and coordinator of Nurse Practitioner Concentration at Capstone School of Nursing. Dr. Poole also provides primary care and focuses her research on health behaviors in vulnerable populations. She addressed the health care challenges and the implementation of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) in Alabama. She made us acutely aware of the overall health needs of children, elderly, rural and inner city populations that currently do not receive adequate attention.

Our banquet speaker was Robert McCurley, Jr. who has been the Director of the Alabama Law Institute from 1975-2012. He continues to provide assistance to the

Alabama Legislature in drafting bills, orienting new legislators on the process and remains actively involved with the Constitutional Revision Commission. He provided a window into the legislative process and anecdotes about past and present legislators.

The panel discussion focused on Alabama resources for energy and water. Speakers informed us about the development of an energy grid and renewable energy sources, the state water planning process, the legal side of providing adequate energy and water to Alabama and ended with a discussion of recycling, conservation of energy and providing clean air and water. This was an excellent way to begin our study of energy and its sources in Alabama.

It was an honor to represent the LWV of East Alabama and to know that our League has excellent and enthusiastic members who work hard to improve the quality of life for all citizens.

News you can use from [LWVAL](#) and [LWVUS](#)

LWVUS positions on the SCOTUS ruling on the [Voting Rights Act](#) as well as [Immigration](#) and [Climate Change](#)

LWVAL update on the [Power Services Commission](#) and Alabama Power Rates

Annual Meeting – A Great Success

Encouraging women to run for office in 2014 was the subject of guest speaker Audrey Salgado's presentation at the Annual Meeting on April 15 at Grace United Methodist Church. Salgado is the chair of The 2014 Project Alabama, a statewide, nonpartisan campaign to increase the number of women in the United States Congress and Alabama Legislative Districts and Executive Branch in the next election cycle. The project does not endorse specific candidates.

"The reason most women don't run for office is that they aren't asked," said Salgado. "Studies show that men decide to run; women will run for office because they are asked, often several times."

It was noted that Alabama ranks 48th among state legislatures with women comprising 12.9% of the legislature. There are 18 women serving in the Alabama legislature. (That number increased to 19 [13.6%] on May 21, when Adline Clarke won a special election for House District 97 to replace Yvonne Kennedy, who died in December 2012.) One of the reason for the interest in increasing the number of women in office is research indicates that women make government more transparent, inclusive and accessible.

The 2014 Project Alabama is working to identify and ask accomplished women to run for office, especially in races without incumbents or special elections. It is also encouraging people to help with the campaigns of women who are running.

During the business portion of the meeting, new officers were elected, the 2013-14 proposed budget was approved, and membership dues were increased from \$45 to \$55 (\$82.50 for household). The newly elected officers are:

President: Kristen De La Fuente

Secretary: Carol Daron

Treasurer (completing De La Fuente's unexpired term): Laura Hill

Directors (two years): Ann Moss, Neali Vann, Ruth Wright

Carolyn Carr, Marilyn Garrett, Sandy Robinson, and Linda Shook are serving the second year of their two-year term.

A nominating committee still needs to be appointed.

Thank you to Carolyn Coker for making arrangements and to all who helped to make this a huge success!



The Sue Flood and Phyllis Rea Awards were presented at the Annual Meeting:

Left – Charlotte Ward (left, pictured with Carolyn Carr) was the recipient of the Sue Flood Award in recognition of a member of the LWV of East Alabama who has made a significant contribution to the League.

Right – William White (center, pictured with Charlotte Ward and Janet Clark) was the recipient of the Phyllis Rea Award, which recognizes a person in the community who has promoted the principles of the LWV as an informed and active participant in government and who has made a significant contribution to our community.

Opinion

GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS FROM WASHINGTON

by Charlotte Ward

“Current legislative efforts in Alabama and elsewhere...show that every state needs monitoring to insure that restrictive voting measures are not enacted.”

While Congress has continued being dysfunctional, during the last week in June, the executive and judicial branches accomplished great things - for better or worse.

On the better side, President Obama has announced his intention to take far-reaching measures to minimize the ways in which our energy production and use are contributing to global warming. (No well-informed thinking person any longer harbors reasonable doubt that humans are a factor in climate change.) I hope the president's program to curb these negative human influences will be fully supported by all Americans. Adding carbon dioxide to the air affects the entire planet for the foreseeable future in increasing global warming, which changes whole ecosystems irreversibly.

Reactions were predictable. Environmentalists muttered, “About time!” The coal industry and its supporters in Congress cried, “Job killer!” A reasonable approach would be to phase out not only coal but oil and

create jobs in green energy fields. A major problem is that Congress even in more cooperative times, is not used to thinking long range. In the absence of the ability or will of Congress to act it is a good thing that the President stepped in.

The Supreme Court's action on voting rights is a mixed bag. Yes, participation by minority voters in the nine states originally targeted for monitoring has improved, and removal of preapproval requirements might even improve Lee County's representation in the Legislature. (Now six of the nine members of the Lee County Legislative delegation do not live in Lee County, and show little interest in us.) But current legislative efforts in Alabama and elsewhere, as well as ad hoc efforts to limit voting in Pennsylvania, Florida, and elsewhere last fall show that every state needs monitoring to insure that restrictive voting measures are not enacted.

As a poll worker myself, I can see the value of a picture ID. But if it costs the prospective voter to get one, it becomes an unconstitutional poll tax. Secretary of State Chapman has said free IDs would be provided for those who needed them. The question now becomes: how are the

elderly, shut-ins, and people who work all the hours government offices are open going to get their pictures made?

A potentially more serious possibility, and one that voting districts in Florida, Pennsylvania, and Ohio have already tried, is that of limiting the time for registration, reducing the number of voting places so that lines are too long for working people to wait, reducing the hours polls are open, and similar measures that make it harder for people to vote.

Some are suggesting a constitutional amendment that assures every citizen has the right to vote. It seems to me the Constitution already does that. What is needed is a new nation-wide voting rights act to insure all eligible voters have a chance to vote. Such a law might set minimum standards for registration deadlines, poll hours and numbers of voting places based on population so that no polling place would have long waiting times. But that would require a functioning Congress.

This opinion piece is by Charlotte Ward, a recent past co-president of the LWVEA.

Get involved with our Voter Registration Events! We need volunteers for the "Tailgate at the AU Library" in August and our National Voter Registration event in September.

Opinion, Part 2

SPEAKING OUT by John Frandsen

Though I was asked to write a few words about the potential perils of speaking up, in the light of current events the perils of NOT speaking up are much greater. We Leaguers need to make our collective voices heard on a number of vitally important non-partisan issues.

One of them is transparency of government at all levels. Every week I miss Lisa Brouillette's column in the *O-A News* shedding light on shenanigans within Auburn's government, and wonder what goes on there today.

National news has recently been dominated by revelations of a vast domestic intelligence program not fully known even to members of Congress. If we are to have any semblance of government of, by, and for the people, concerns for national security and avoidance of public scrutiny of government functionaries at all levels cannot be allowed to trump the right of the people to know at election time the nature of their

government and the true positions of their representatives in that government. Are these positions those of their constituents, or are they for sale to whichever special interests offer the most?

Another issue is the perpetually increasing power of the executive branch, an increase that upsets the constitutional system of checks and balances. Congress has essentially forfeited to the President its Constitutional mandate to declare war, and executive agencies do all they can to thwart investigative reporting by the press. Thus have we become a national security state with secret programs whose names cannot legally be uttered, secret courts whose rulings and membership cannot be divulged, and executive agencies whose budgets and functions are secret.

Still another issue is that the "...liberty and justice for all" that we recite in the Pledge of Allegiance has indeed become "liberty and justice for some," with the rich, famous, and politically influential held to different standards than citizens in general. No society can maintain

stability if such a situation is perpetuated.

Is this what we want to be as a society, or really need to be? We must speak up powerfully and soon on this and other "nonpartisan" issues. We cannot wait for them to fester, for governments to become ever more opaque, for justice to be ever more distorted, for citizens to become ever more deprived of the information they require to indeed be the ultimate source of the power of democratic government—government derived from the power of the people.

Are the League's procedures for formulating and expressing official positions equal to the rapidity with which public opinion is molded in this age of electronic communications and 24-hour news cycles? If these positions are to be influential, and the League is to be reckoned a significant force in the public arena, they must be stated while the issues remain prominent in the news.

This opinion piece is by John Frandsen, a former LWVEA director.

Observer Corps - Get Involved!

- [Auburn City Council](#) - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 7PM at 141 N. Ross St.
- [Opelika City Council](#) - 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month at 7PM at 204 S. 7th St.
- [Auburn Planning Commission](#) - 2nd Thursday of each month at 5PM at 141 N. Ross St.
- [Opelika Planning Commission](#) - 4th Tuesday of each month at 3PM at the Public Works Facility, 700 Fox Trail
- [Lee County Commission](#) - 2nd and last Mondays of the month at 6PM (pre-meeting at 4PM) at the Lee County Courthouse

We also need observers for local school and water boards.

If you are interested in becoming an Observer, contact [Kristen De La Fuente](#) for more information.

Calendar of Events

We want to see you! Add these events to your calendars and get involved!

July 22 - Join us for our Summer Social! Plan to meet at Zazu's on Magnolia at 5:30 on Monday, July 22nd. This is a great excuse to get together, catch up on the latest news and start off our new season on a fun note! Drinks and appetizers will be available for purchase.

July 27 - Social Media Workshop Do you know that the LWVEA has a Facebook page and a Twitter account? Did you know that you can keep tabs on what your elected officials are up to as it happens? If so, you are in the know! If not, you need to get connected! Please [RSVP](#) for our **Social Media Workshop** to be held on Saturday, July 27th, from 1-3PM at 660 East Lane, Auburn. Jean Johnson from LWVAL will be on hand to introduce the various social media outlets as well as provide hands-on training in getting set up to get connected. Bring your laptop, tablet or Smartphone. All skill and knowledge levels are welcome!

August 1 - Hot Topics Lunches are set to start on August 1st at 11AM at Chappy's Deli on Glenn. These informal meetings are meant to reconnect members with each other by engaging in open and lively discussions about current (Hot!) topics. Venture to the tables in the back room to join in!

[Upcoming Events \(details to follow in the August VOTER\)](#)

August 19 - Auburn University New Faculty Orientation with Voter Registration Drive; Second floor of Foy Hall in the afternoon

August 26 - Membership meeting on Proposed Tax Increases Panel TBD; Auburn First Baptist Church beginning at 7PM with social time starting at 6:30

August 30 - Tailgate at the AU Library with Voter Registration Drive from 10AM until 1PM

September 10 - LWVEA National Voter Registration Day The actual day for the national drive is September 24th. Since the special vote on the Auburn property tax increase is on that day, we will hold our registration drive earlier to make sure voters can register in time to participate.

Registering voters is a core component to the League of Women Voters. It is more important than ever to make sure that everyone who is eligible to vote has the opportunity to do so. We have several Voter Registration events planned so please add your name to the list of volunteers.

Photo at right: Laura Newland-Hill registers a voter at the Tailgate @ the Library in 2012.





LWVEA

660 East Lane
Auburn, AL 36830

E-MAIL:
president@lww-eastalabama.org

We're on the Web!
Visit us at:
<http://lww-eastalabama.org/>

LWV of East Alabama Board of Directors, 2013-2014

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>Kristen De La Fuente</i> | <i>President</i> |
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| <i>Ann Moss</i> | <i>Director - The Voter Editor</i> |
| <i>Charlotte Ward</i> | <i>Website Management (off-board)</i> |

Dues are Due by September 30th

Your dues go towards the functioning of the League of Women Voters at local, state and national levels. Locally, we use our portion of dues to send members to state and national conventions and councils as well as funding for literature for voter services and registration drives.

Individual members \$55.00

Household of two \$82.50

Please send checks made payable to LWVEA to our Treasurer

Laura Hill, 1317 Clearmont Cir., Opelika, AL 36801

About the League of Women Voters of East Alabama...

The League of Women Voters is a grassroots, nonpartisan, political organization that "has fought since 1920 to improve our systems of

government and impact public policies through citizen education and advocacy." Membership is open to men and women 18 or older.

Individual, family and student memberships are available. Join us today and help make a difference in the East Alabama area!

**LEAGUE OF WOMEN
VOTERS OF EAST ALABAMA**
660 East Lane
Auburn, AL 36830

