



The Voter

September 2021 Quarterly Newsletter

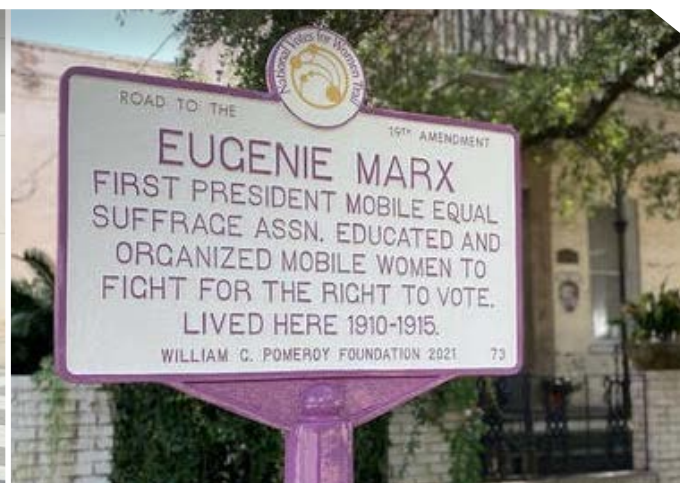


Table of Contents

03	From the President's Desk
05	State Board Members
08	2021 Convention Report
09	Voting Rights Restoration Report
10	Redistricting Report
11	The PPFM Report
12	Voter Services Report
13	Advocacy Team Report
13	DEI Report
14	The AL Constitution ReCompilation
15	Centennial Report
18	Local League Reports

From the President's Desk

This is my first State President's message for the LWVAL Voter Newsletter and I'm excited to share what has happened over the last several months, and tell you where we are heading!

First, I need to recognize and thank the Tennessee Valley Local League for their technical prowess and skills as they planned and conducted our first ever virtual 2021 LWVAL Convention business meeting. In this edition of the Voter you can read about your State League's officers and board members for LWVAL and officers and trustees for the Education Fund. These independent Boards oversee and direct the business of the Alabama State League of Women Voters.

In July we had the second half of the LWVAL 2021 Convention, which is where celebrations and educational events of Convention occur. Stephanie Butler and her very talented statewide team created a seamless, dynamic, and very engaging event that kept us all glued to our seats! Although we met virtually this year we still managed to celebrate our accomplishments and present the prestigious Transparency and Katz awards to two outstanding organizations and held a panel on Alabama's Open Records. Finally, we listened to Keynote speaker Kyle Whitmire reflect on the challenges of holding Alabama's political leaders accountable as we demand transparency in government. You can [watch the Open Records Forum on our Youtube channel](#).

On September 1st, at the first community hearing for the State Reapportionment Committee, I testified for the League of Women Voters of Alabama and presented the alternative congressional map proposal. The map trifold I showed was submitted to Montgomery as exhibit #1. An expanded version of my testimony was submitted to the State Reapportionment Committee that included all the maps, along with rationale for why we believe maintaining county lines intact is the preferred redistricting solution for federal and state legislative districts. If you'd like to learn more, you can [read to my written testimony](#) and [review the map](#) with my talking points. When you have a chance to read the testimony and check out the map, I invite you to [share your feedback](#) with the LWVAL.

I am extremely proud of the League of Women Voters leaders at the state and local levels who showed up and testified at reapportionment hearings in their region! I am also thankful for LWV members who also showed up to testify at hearings across the state to express their concerns and to identify their communities of interest. Additionally, there have been many, many LWV members who have been watching all of the hearings (over 22) virtually. Additionally, there have been many citizens and local leaders attending and testifying at hearings all over the state. This is certainly a vibrant example of Democracy at work in Alabama!

State Senators Singleton and Smitherman both indicated they supported the LWVAL map and would prefile a bill to formally sponsor it at the special legislative session in October 2021. When the Special Session is called by the Governor in October to vote on Alabama's voting district maps, our LWVAL Advocacy team will be actively monitoring and reporting what is happening in Montgomery. In addition to keeping you informed about what's happening, we will likely issue calls-to-action urging you to contact your elected leaders to call for Fair Maps at all levels of government. Stay tuned for more to come!

In addition to redistricting, we are getting ready for the coming year. Our new Voter Services co-chair Jameria Moore will be reaching out to Local League Voter Services leads in order to

brainstorm and plan for how the State and Local leagues can collaborate, share, and be even more effective on Get Out The Vote, materials and education, Vote411, candidate forums, etc. The LWVAL Advocacy Team (co-chaired by Robin Buckelew and Beth McDaniel) is planning for a strong impact during the 2022 Legislative session as we push for voting rights, open records, and open meetings. LWV members are also attending the Alabama Constitutional ReCompilation Committee meetings so we know what is happening and can inform voters what to expect when the updated Constitution shows up on their ballot in 2022. Additionally, we will have many educational and member development forums on several important topics over the next year.

There are exciting developments in the works from an organization perspective too! For example, the Membership Development Chair, Carol Prickett, is working with Local League Presidents and their Membership Development Leads to identify opportunities for members to get more involved as event coordinators and leaders. We are expecting that through active involvement, working with the LWV, folks will one day want to take on a leadership role in local and state boards!

Please read the newsletter articles which have been written by LWVAL leaders. Take a look at the event notices too. If something is sparking your interest, I hope you will get involved!

Kathy Jones

President, LWV Alabama

State Board Members

We are pleased to welcome new board members on both our Education Fund and LWVAL Boards.

EXECUTIVE BOARD



Kathy Jones
President

Kathy Jones is an Alabama native originally from Birmingham. She worked as a space flight systems engineer and project manager at NASA Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville, until retiring in 2016. In the summer of 2017, with the guidance of the LWVAL, Kathy established and led the Tennessee Valley Local League, as well as serving as its Voter Services director. She served as Secretary for 2019-2021 and currently as the President of the LWV State Boards and considers herself very fortunate to collaborate with amazing and strong women and men dedicated to carrying out the work of the League!



Jean Johnson
Vice President

Jean Johnson, an Alabama native, serves as LWVAL First Vice President and has been a member of the Greater Birmingham League since about 1994. She has served as local League president, co-president of the state board, and in various capacities on both boards. "The League has given me rare opportunities to engage, learn, and grow and to improve public policy in Alabama. I don't think this would be possible in any other organization." Jean enjoys reading and travel (when possible), and practicing World Oyama Karate, a full-contact, Japanese style of the martial art, for the past 28 years.



Carol Prickett
Vice President

Carol Prickett serves as Second Vice President for LWVAL and Spokesperson and Membership Chair for LWVGT. Her career as a Board Certified Music Therapist included both clinical work and 40 years as a college professor. Since retiring in 2014, she has been active in LWV, in the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at the University of Alabama, and has enjoyed traveling, especially internationally. Carol has never considered herself a "techie", but across the past year and a half, she has become surprisingly efficient at using zoom.



Connie Arnwine
Secretary

Connie Arnwine has been a member of the LWVGB for fifteen years. She has served as a director on the LWVGB board under two different leadership teams and has also participated in several special league studies including health, agriculture and money in politics. Helping with voter registration is her very favorite activity with the league. She is very proud of her local and state leagues' accomplishments this past year and honored to serve on the state board as secretary.



Yvonne Brakefield
Treasurer

Yvonne Brakefield Knowles, current LWVAL Treasurer, joined the LWV of Greater Birmingham in 1984, and has served in leadership positions at both the state and local league levels. Yvonne is a retired Information Technology Project Manager with BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. and enjoys reading, family history research and all things fiber arts.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Robin Buckelew

Dr. Robin B. Buckelew (LWV Tennessee Valley) retired in 2012, after 45 years of federal service, as the Director for Weapons Development and Integration. She has a Ph.D. in Engineering from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, and she is an Alabama Licensed Professional Engineer. In 1995, she was the first woman to be inducted into the Alabama Engineering Hall of Fame.



Catherine Davies

Catherine Evans Davies (LWV Greater Tuscaloosa) is the editor of the LWVAL blog, a member of the Advocacy Team, and a co-chair of the LWVUS People Powered Fair Maps effort for Alabama. Her great-grandmother was active in promoting the passage of the 19th Amendment. She was born in New York City, and lived in Pennsylvania, Arizona, California, and Florida before coming to Alabama. She is Professor Emerita of Linguistics from the Department of English at the University of Alabama, with research interests in cross-cultural interaction, Southern dialect, humor, and gender and language.



Darlene Freemon

Darlene Freemon moved to Tuscaloosa in 2015 and joined the LWV as a way to meet people who share her interests in politics and community improvement. She is a retired English teacher with a degree in Medieval/Renaissance Literature, and also serves on the board of directors of the Alabama Renaissance Faire. She is an active member in Delta Kappa Gamma International, an honor society for Key Women Educators. Darlene looks forward to learning from and working with the other members of the LWVAL board.



Rose Johnson

Rose Johnson is a past co-president of League of Women Voters Mobile and a retired social worker. She is active in her church's food ministry and mission projects and currently studying theology at Spring Hill College. Rose hikes regularly with her husband, Francis, in the mountains of southern Colorado. She is particularly interested in social justice issues.



Carol Mosely

Carol Mosely moved to Montgomery in 2008 and became a member of the League of Women Voters in about 2014. My professional career was in the field of sexual violence prevention and response, primarily on college campuses. Now I'm working as a gardener and groundskeeper. I was born and raised in Georgia, and lived for many years as an adult in California. I believe the League serves an important function in our democracy and I'm honored to be in this position to help our organization—and our country—move forward.



Stephen Stetson

Stephen Stetson is an attorney with nearly 15 years of public policy experience in Alabama. He has worked for national and statewide-level nonprofits in the fields of environmental protection and anti-poverty advocacy, and is currently doing consulting and writing a book. He enjoys reading, hiking, and music. He lives in Montgomery.



Elsa Roberts

A member of the Tennessee Valley League, Elsa lives in Huntsville. She is a digital strategist and designer skilled in practicing the delicate art of persuasion. Her work has touched on elections, community organizing, public space, mobility, and civic life. She holds an MS in Rhetoric and Technical Communication from Michigan Technological University. Elsa is never happier than in the kitchen developing a new recipe or preparing dinner for friends.

EDUCATION FUND TRUSTEES



Robin Buckelew

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Ellen Buckner

Ellen B. Buckner PhD, RN, CNE, AE-C, FNAP, is a Professor of Nursing at Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing, Samford University. She has spent more than 45 years as a nurse educator in Alabama. Dr. Buckner is working with Samford students to form a unit of the League of Women Voters, as part of the Greater Birmingham League. She represents the LWVAL on Cover Alabama, a coalition to encourage Medicaid Expansion in Alabama. She is a board member of the LWVAL Educational Foundation.



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Jameria Moore

Jameria Johnson Moore is a native of Birmingham, AL. She received her BS in Civil Engineering from Alabama A&M University, her MBA from the University of Alabama in Birmingham, and her law degree from Birmingham School of Law. Prior to working in the legal field, she was the Area Operations Engineer for the Alabama Department of Transportation. She is currently a Municipal Judge for the City of Birmingham and a Partner with Sperling & Moore, PC. She and her husband, Keith, have four children, and six grandchildren.



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Carol Mosely moved to Montgomery in 2008 and became a member of the League of Women Voters in about 2014. My professional career was in the field of sexual violence prevention and response, primarily on college campuses. Now I'm working as a gardener and groundskeeper. I was born and raised in Georgia, and lived for many years as an adult in California. I believe the League serves an important function in our democracy and I'm honored to be in this position to help our organization—and our country—move forward.

2021 Convention Report

From Stephanie Butler

Thank you to everyone who joined us for the second half of the League of Women Voters of Alabama's 2021 Convention. Thanks to the hard work of a great team, we were able to gather virtually on July 17 for Sunshine & Summertime, part two of the LWVAL 2021 Convention.

The event was open to the public and was hosted via Zoom and broadcast live on YouTube so people could join from anywhere. Thank you to everyone who worked hard behind the scenes to create a safe and accessible event.

The morning started with LWVAL leaders hosting Coffee and Conversation breakouts. Hopefully those who joined us met someone or learned something new. Then Kathy Jones led award presentations. The 2021 Transparency in Government was given to Greater-Birmingham Alliance to Stop Pollution (GASP) for their work in recent years to bring justice to the historic and ongoing toxic contamination from two coking plants. As part of the effort to address decades of environmental injustice and advocate for the responsible parties to clean up the communities of north Birmingham, GASP uncovered a government corruption and bribery scandal unlike any we have seen in recent history. Their efforts led to the uncovering that the law firm Balch and Bingham conspired with their clients Drummond Company to bribe state Representative Oliver Robinson to conduct a public misinformation campaign about the efforts to get the polluted sites listed in the EPA National Priorities List. Ultimately through legal actions on behalf of GASP, the corruption unveiled not only the involvement of corporations and politicians, but also government agency leaders, such as the Regional Director of EPA, the Director of the Alabama Department of Environmental Management and appointed Environmental Management Commissioners. GASP's executive director, Michael Hansen, was present to accept the award.

The 2021 Jane Katz Public Service Award was given to the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) for providing legal representation to people who have been illegally convicted, unfairly sentenced, or abused in state jails and prisons; re-entry assistance to formerly incarcerated people; and for their broader work in the public interest to change the narrative about race in America through groundbreaking research and reports on racial injustice and criminal justice reform, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration, and the Community Remembrance Project. Ms. Rebecca Sai, the Equal Justice Initiative's Communications Manager accepted the prestigious Katz award.

And the 2021 Joyce Woodworth Memorial Award was presented to LWVAL's immediate past president, Barbara Caddell. Barbara served as president from 2017 to 2021, and during that time the League in Alabama has experienced unprecedented growth in statewide membership and grant income, established collaborative partnerships and alliances with many national and state level nonpartisan voting rights and social justice organizations, led the fight for the right for all Alabamians to be able to vote safely during the 2020 pandemic, established the LWVAL Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee, established a statewide network of Voter Rights Restoration experts, has overseen the expansion of Vote411 at the state and to all local leagues, established the LWVAL Advocacy Team, contracted and funded a nationally known DEI expert to consult with all of our Local Leagues, and we have expanded our People Powered Fairmaps and ChargeHub capacity to support Local League communities during local and state level redistricting efforts. Through all of the opportunities and challenges of the last four years, Ms.

Caddell was more than equal to the challenge. Her ability to lead the LWVAL and the LWVAL Education Fund with grace and compassion while balancing and respecting the often-conflicting perspectives of her board members was instructive and has set the stage for a bright future for Alabama.

The 2021 Phyllis Rea Membership Award for a small League was given to Baldwin County and for a large League to Tennessee Valley. Thank you to the League leaders and members in Baldwin County and the Tennessee Valley for the wonderful work that you do that makes others want to be a part of it.

Charli Sorenson, joined us from the League of Kittitas County in Washington state to accept a special thank you for investing in LWVAL. The League of Kittitas County donated funds that helped LWVAL to do voter outreach across the state in advance of the 2020 elections.

During the panel on Open Records, moderator Kim Bailey led a lively discussion about recent and upcoming legislation. Sharing their expertise on the panel were: Association of County Commissioners of Alabama executive director Sonny Brasfield, ACLU legal director Tish Gotell Faulks, and Alabama Press Association executive director Felicia Mason. The forum revealed that the pursuit of government transparency had taken a back seat due to immediate COVID concerns. We hope that highlighting this issue serves as a reminder that a significant lack of government transparency in Alabama has been identified by many advocacy groups to be the number one challenge in holding accountable those who disregard the rights of citizens. And we encourage legislators and advocates to resume the negotiations with urgency in the fall.

We concluded with our keynote speaker, Kyle Whitmire, political columnist for the Alabama Media Group who shared his perspectives on the seemingly never ending challenge of holding Alabama's leaders accountable while demanding transparency in government. Carol Prickett and Jean Johnson did the heavy lifting of leading the question and answers after the session.

And for those who stayed for the after party, Kim White hosted trivia with prizes donated by local Leagues.

Many hands make light work, and the Convention planning team was incredible. Thank you to Kim Bailey, Robin Buckelew, Barbara Caddell, Phyllis Harvey-Hall, Beth McDaniel, Carol Prickett, Elsa Roberts, Stephen Stetson, and Kim White. A huge thank you to Jean Johnson and Kathy Jones who did more than anyone can imagine to make the event run so smoothly. And we appreciate the donation of musical talent that kept us energized throughout the day long event. Longtime LWVAL member and leader, Jeanine Dr. Jazz Normand shared the debut of her original work "The Suffrage Centennial Boogie". And Chicago-based artist and activist, Leslie Nuss, shared music to fill our breaks.

Voting Rights Restoration Report

From Bryan Lorge

Our Voting Rights Restoration (VRR) efforts continue to move forward. In June 2021, 33 League members took VRR training. Some of these folks were veterans refreshing their skills and some

were new to the VRR process. It is always great to add new people as we publicize the VRR process and reach out to citizens that need our help.

The Thru Text Campaign in conjunction with the Campaign Legal Center has resumed after a brief pause. The online advertisements have been updated and we are generating more names that need assistance with getting their Voting Rights restored.

The LWVAL has been active with the Alabama Voting Rights Coalition in developing an advocacy platform to improve the VRR process in Alabama. While the exact nature of our relationship is still being determined, we have had productive discussion as to the issues with the VRR process and changes that can be made to reduce the Voter Suppression effects of felony convictions.

The VRR team has been working with other local groups in Birmingham and Huntsville to provide support at the Board of Pardon and Paroles Day Reporting Centers and Field Offices. These efforts are a great way to contact people that need our help. Also, connections are being made with BPP personnel leading to ways we can better support them.

We are still in need of additional volunteers to support our VRR efforts. If you are interested, please [email Bryan Lorge](#). Although the next primary election is still 8 months away, now is the time we need to be active to ensure people get their Voting Rights restored. If the voter needs a CERV, this will take time.

Redistricting Report

From Kathy Jones

This summer has been a hot and busy one for redistricting! There is a lot going on and the State and Local Leagues have been a powerful presence at the Alabama Reapportionment Committee Hearings. Our effectiveness at the hearings are due to several factors:

- Over two and a half years of research and involvement in redistricting.
- Since before the pandemic, LWVAL Advocacy co-chair Ms. Robin Buckelew has traveled the state sharing with local leagues and community groups her original analysis that clearly demonstrates how communities have been gerrymandered.
- As a partner with the LWVUS People Powered Fair Maps (PPFM) Initiative and the LWVUS CHARGEHUB redistricting initiative, our PPFM co-leads Jill Allen and Catherine Davies have been attending training and gathering useful information that is being passed to the Local Leagues redistricting leads to share critical information and training.
- The Voices of the League Blog editor, Catherine Davies, wrote a series of 10 blog posts that systematically provides information about redistricting in an easy to read and interesting manner.
- Recognizing we also need to engage with the public in creative ways, the PPFM produced a four part entertaining video starring #ChillCity which highlighted the insidious impacts of gerrymandering when the politicians draw district lines to protect their positions and power.
- To strengthen our redistricting efforts, the LWVAL has been working closely with the

Alabama Forward Redistricting Table and other organizations to build community engagement.

- We are also working with the Southern Coalition for Social Justice (SCSJ) and the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to sponsor a Community Redistricting Organizations Working for Democracy (CROWD) Fellow, Stephanie Barnett, who is working with the other Alabama CROWD Fellows to do statewide community organizing and training for redistricting.
- Working with nationally renowned Alabama voting rights/redistricting attorneys and expert mapmakers, the LWVAL developed a whole-county, alternative Alabama congressional map proposal which would provide two minority opportunity districts.
- The LWVAL will conduct a Citizens Reapportionment Mapping Forum on Wednesday Oct 13th at 6pm-8pm to provide an opportunity to review, understand and discuss the maps that have been submitted by the various non-governmental organizations (including but not limited to the LWVAL map) to the Alabama Reapportionment Committee. The objective is to review and discuss the various maps to reach a common understanding of the maps and to create shared terminology, in preparation for the upcoming special session. Stay tuned for more on this forum!
- Pam Caruso is leading a team from across the state who will plan and conduct the LWVAL sponsored forum and the shadow hearings. "Shadow hearing: a public forum held concurrent with the formal Legislative special session where the public will review, understand, and critique the maps that the legislators are considering. The forum attendees will be able to provide feedback and potential impacts to their communities of interest."

The PPFM Report

From Catherine Davies and Jill Allen

The People Powered Fair Maps initiative of the LWVUS began in 2019 in anticipation of the Census and the reapportionment and redistricting that would need to be done. The link is [here](#)

Given our circumstances in Alabama, LWVUS recommended that we focus on the "Federal Fix." This meant not only encouraging members to support the federal legislation in the form of the For the People Act and the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, but also promoting a fair Congressional map for Alabama.

We have written a 10-post blog series that tries to explain redistricting, with particular relevance for us here in Alabama. We believe that the blog provides essential background to understand what's going on. We've written it in as clear a way as possible, and you can easily skip around to focus on what you need to know. The blog series has been advertised in various forms (most notably on the LWVAL home page), but if you haven't read it yet [now is your opportunity](#).

Each local League has designated a contact person for PPFM, and we have passed on key information from LWVUS PPFM to them via email and given them access to a google drive resource folder with information such as the protocol for testimony that we have gleaned from the supervisor of the Committee office, guidelines for preparing and delivering testimony,

information on the idea of “community of interest,” and recordings of the hearings (courtesy of the CROWD fellows). You can follow the link at the end of the next paragraph.

The Committee has been holding hearings around the state during the last two weeks (and continuing through Sept. 16). Members of the Committee (typically the chairs, Senator McClendon and Representative Pringle, and the lawyer for the Committee, Mr. Walker) appear virtually at each location from their conference room in Montgomery, and at each location people attend either in person or virtually. LWVAL has had the largest consistent presence at the hearings of any group, and our representatives have spoken eloquently. We have recordings of the hearings [you can listen to here](#) (courtesy of the CROWD fellows).

LWVUS provided LWVAL with the funding to hire a professional mapmaker for the Congressional districts. The whole-county map was drawn based on legal advice provided pro bono. The notion of “community of interest” is focused on the county as an administrative unit. This map has now been presented to the Permanent Committee on Reapportionment of the Alabama Legislature by LWVAL President Kathy Jones, and Senator Singleton and Representative Smitherman have said that they will submit it in the required form as a bill. [Here is a link to the testimony](#) (including the map) that was submitted to the Committee.

Voter Services Report

From Jameria Moore

The League of Women Voters actively encourages and supports all eligible citizens to register and to vote in national, state, and local elections. Our volunteers are ready to take on the important task of voter education and registration on National Voter Registration Day September 28, 2021. The LWVAL has partnered with The National Voter Registration Day Team and will have posters and stickers in English and Spanish to distribute to the general public. Voter Services is currently planning a drive-up Voter Registration Drive with location to be announced shortly. Volunteers are needed for this amazing opportunity to service our community.

The week of September 13-20 was National Voter Registration Week for People with Disabilities; NDVRW is a national, nonpartisan campaign to register, educate, and prepare voters with disabilities for the 2021 elections and beyond. NDVRW is coordinated by the American Association of People with Disabilities’ (AAPD) REV UP Voting Campaign. REV UP stands for Register! Educate! Vote! Use your Power! NDVRW provided training, resources, and voter registration to the disability community.

On September 10, Disability Resource Network was at Alabama A&M University! The university hosted a Community Service and Civic Engagement Fair on the AAMU Quad!

On September 14, the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD) hosted a virtual summit from 11pm-3pm CST. The coalition also hosted a watch party on Zoom for community members interested in attending.

On September 16, Disability Rights & Resources (1418 6th Ave N) in downtown Birmingham offered services to any potential voters with disabilities who needed assistance completing voter registration forms. The office was open that day (with COVID precautions in place) to allow for community members to come in and receive help from staff. Staff were also available to help

community members with online registration forms over the phone; members of the public can call (205) 251-2223 for assistance.

Advocacy Team Report

From Robin Buckelew and Beth McDaniels

The LWVAL Advocacy Team is off to a good start this Fall. Advocacy by the League attempts to change laws, rules, regulations and processes to make voting easier and more equitable for citizens of Alabama. Examples of activities in the past year include: 1) identifying issues with voting rights restoration in Alabama, and working with electoral officials and educational institutions to correct restoration processes, 2) advocating with Appleseed for a law to prevent the loss of a driver's license for non-driving related misdemeanors (a driver's license is often the only voter ID possessed by a citizen), 3) advocating with the Alabama Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired for better access to absentee ballots from their homes. We have also been deeply involved in redistricting activities in the state.

This Fall, while continuing to work redistricting activities, we are gearing up to support Appleseed in further legislation on the driver's license reform bill. Last term the effort to obtain a resolution to opt out of federal rules, mandating loss of driver's license for any drug offense, was successful. Now we need to push the state bill to enact the actual state legislation.

We also plan to continue working with Auburn University to improve the content of their voter registrar training, so that Alabama laws will be interpreted correctly when citizens attempt to get their voting rights restored.

Of course, as all League members know, the LWVAL continues to be deeply involved in redistricting activities, providing testimony, creating "Fair Maps," and monitoring legislative activities.

Finally, we will be monitoring bills introduced in the Legislature, in the special sessions we anticipate, and those we expect in the regular session next Spring, for issues or opportunities regarding voting rights and voting access in the coming years.

As always, we will be receptive and sensitive to voting rights and voting access issues brought to us by citizens and organizations who seek our help in furthering voting rights and voting access in Alabama and the nation.

DEI Report

From Dr. Zillah Fluker

I was brought on board as a diversity consultant by LWVAL to help with their diversity initiatives. I have since had two meeting types: a one-hour intake meeting with LWVAL leadership and a two-hour session with broader LWVAL membership. Initially, my plan was to do two separate reports. However, after starting work on that approach, it occurred to me that there was value in calibrating all the chapters and adding a secondary piece where there will be an electronic survey

to summarize the discussions once I have gone through all the chapters. I will then develop a State Report as well as Local Chapter Recommendations.

Overall, meetings with all but 3 of the chapters are complete. The overarching theme for all chapters is:

- 01.** Have reacted well to the pandemic via utilization of ZOOM. No missed meetings and engaged members. The utilization of ZOOM has produced a new way to engage membership, and all members of LWVAL have indicated they plan to adopt ZOOM to engage membership. ZOOM has also provided new opportunity areas for the league to offer:
 - I.** Flexibility in meeting times to be able to reach a broader audience. Directly impact generational participation increasing more diversity by attracting collegiates, early career professionals, and working professionals.
- 02.** Limited number of male members. 1 or 2 male attendees but they are active meeting participants. Opportunity to appeal to more male representation and participation.
- 03.** Programming is an opportunity area as each chapter has program strengths and each has program opportunities. League members got more excited when talking about programming that comes from the League national programming, and from programming that comes in that allows for local chapter input.
- 04.** Perception: strongest perception is LWVAL are extremely reliable; "They do what they say they're going to do, and they show up with consistent engagement."
 - I.** Recommendation is to leverage this perception to start partnering with organizations that do not "look like them." Biggest perception is the organization is too "liberal." Although the organization is supposed to be non-partisan, they are perceived as being liberal. The LWVAL should consider partnering with organizations that are more conservative to offset the perception of liberal bias.

NEXT STEPS:

- Goal to complete all chapter sessions 1 & 2
- Preliminary reports for chapters
- Comprehensive report for states

Any questions or concerns contact Dr. Zillah Fluker (860) 463-4348

The AL Constitution Recompilation

From Nancy Ekberg

As most League members know, a constitutional amendment passed unanimously by both houses of the Alabama Legislature in 2019 and by the voters last November, will allow the Legislative Services Agency to recompile the 1901 Constitution to remove racist language, duplication, redundant wording and words no longer legally valid; but add no other words or make no other

changes. The amendment requires the LSA to present their draft to the Legislature in 2022. If it is approved by both Houses, it will go to the voters in November of 2022.

To that end, a law was passed in 2021 to create a Constitutional Recompilation Committee to oversee what the LSA did.

That Committee consists of:

- Anita Archer, an attorney who served in education and government agencies.
- Al Vance, a lawyer serving in business leadership areas
- Greg Butrus, governmental relations officer with Balch & Bingham
- Stan Gregory, specialist in city, state and county financing
- Arthur Orr, Alabama Senator from Decatur
- Sam Givhan, Alabama Senator from Madison County
- Rodger Smitherman, Alabama Senator from Jefferson County
- Merika Coleman, Alabama Representative from Midfield
- Danny Garrett, Alabama Representative from Trussville
- Ben Robbins, Alabama Representative from Sylacauga
- At their first meeting, July 8th, they chose Merika Coleman, Chair and Arthur Orr as their Vice-Chair.

All meetings are open to the public, and there is one coming up on October 13, all in Room 200 of the State House, 22 South Union Street, Montgomery, at 10:00 a.m. You can view the meetings on the [State Legislature website](#) under Resources and then under Media. They are listed as House Committee Room 200.

Othni Latham, LSA Executive Director reminded them that their task was to oversee changes related to:

- Removing the racist language
- Removing duplicative or repealed sections
- Consolidating economic development provisions
- Arranging all local amendments by the applicable county

The Alabama Constitution now has 977 Amendments and 13 have already been filed for the 2022 Legislative Session.

Information about this and subsequent meetings is [available on the LSA website](#). Read news stories about this [on the ACCR website](#).

Centennial Report

Two new women's suffrage historic markers were dedicated in August to help celebrate the 101st anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment. These two markers are among 250 donated nation-

wide by the Pomeroy Foundation as part of the National Votes for Women Trail. Alabama has a total of 6 Pomeroy markers: in Birmingham, Decatur, Huntsville, Mobile, Selma, and Tuskegee.

BIRMINGHAM

From Leonette Slay

On August 21st, eleven members of LWVGB met at Rickwood Field, along with many other suffrage supporters, to observe the unveiling of a marker to commemorate the site of August 18, 1915 women's suffrage day. This special day, five years before the ratification of the 19th Amendment, was hosted by the Alabama Equal Suffrage Association and the Birmingham Barons, a noted progressive organization of the time. At the unveiling, Dr. Alex Colvin of the Alabama Department of Archives and History held the crowd mesmerized as she related in vivid detail how the day in 1915 unfolded. The Barons, playing the Chattanooga Lookouts, wore yellow sashes in support of suffrage and two female softball teams played an inning to show they could



play as well as the men. To commemorate that aspect of a fateful day, the UAB women's softball team was on hand to hear this piece of local suffrage history and also to later demonstrate their prowess on the field.

The Friends of Rickwood Field spokesperson explained that Rickwood is the nation's oldest baseball field and described their ongoing efforts to keep the field beautifully restored. Visitors were encouraged to walk out on the field and through the gift shop, where complimentary box lunches were given to those attending the unveiling. The senior elected official on hand for the dedication was SEN Linda Coleman-Madison. We talked about the possibility of having one of the unadorned outfield signs painted with a suffrage slogan that would catch the eye of visitors and baseball teams playing there (other sections have painted ads). LWVGB members also discussed the possibility of designing a t-shirt that could be sold in the gift shop.

The local CBS affiliate covered the ceremony, and about fifty celebrated this special day in Birmingham that occurred 106 years ago.

MOBILE

from Mary Anne Wilson

The League of Women Voters celebrated Women's Equality Day in two phases: on August 25, the Mobile City Council issued a proclamation honoring Eugenie Marx and declaring August 26 "Eugenie Marx Day" in Mobile. On August 26, 2021, a Pomeroy Foundation Suffrage Marker was dedicated at the site of the Marx family home where Eugenie lived when she was elected the first President of the Mobile Equal Suffrage Association, precursor of the League of Women Voters. It is still a residence and the current homeowners attended the dedication. This Pomeroy Marker is the only one sponsored by a local league. This outdoor, socially distanced ceremony was well attended by the public with coverage by all major media outlets in Mobile.

Barbara Caddell, immediate past president of LWVAL and organizer of the events, introduced the speakers and read a tribute from the Pomeroy Foundation. The program included welcoming remarks by Anitra Belle Henderson of the Mayor's Office and Suzanne Schwartz, President, LWV Mobile. Speakers included Rabbi Edward Boraz, Congregation Sha'arai Shomayim, of which the Marx family were members; Meg Fowler, Director, History Museum of Mobile; Valerie Burnes, PhD., Alabama Women's Suffrage Centennial Committee; Steve Murray, Director, Alabama Department of Archives and History; and, Elizabeth Theris-Boone, Manager, Local History & Genealogy at Mobile Public Library. A reception followed at the Main Branch of the Mobile Public Library, a few blocks from the site, hosted by LWV Mobile.

Eugenie Marx, the honoree, was a kindergarten teacher, a poet, a social justice activist, and a very adventurous soul. After attending several state-wide suffrage meetings, she was elected President of the Mobile Equal Suffrage Association in 1914. The notion of female suffrage was generally unpopular in Alabama and Mobile was the last part of the state to organize suffrage activities. Eugenie Marx deserves our respect for being willing, not only to embrace an unpopular cause, but to lead local efforts. As President, she invited such nationally known suffrage speakers as Dr. Anna Howard Shaw to speak and wrote editorials in support of traditional League issues (improving public education, restricting child labor, etc.). In 1919, she traveled to France under the auspices of the Jewish War Board to assist American soldiers stationed there. While in

France, she met her future husband, Melvern Metcalfe, a native of Nebraska. They were married in 1921 and she made the rest of her life in Nebraska and South Dakota - far away from Mobile.

The League extends a special note of thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Todd Fowler, the current owners, for their hospitality in helping to make this dedication such a success.

Local League Reports

LWV OF BALDWIN COUNTY

by Lynne Switzky, Co-president

In May, LWVBC held a virtual Annual Meeting and showed "The Fight for the Noblest Democracy: Women's Suffrage in Alabama," a film created and produced by Jenna Bedsole which documents the story of suffrage in Alabama, as part of the greater overall suffrage movement.

In June, we held a postcard writing party at the Fairhope Brewing Company and prepared messages to send to Governor Ivey supporting Medicaid Expansion.

In July, we set up a Voter Registration table at the Baldwin County Juneteenth Celebration, postponed from June due to impending storms, and a week later set up Voter Registration again for a Neighborhood Festival in Daphne.

Happy Birthday LWVBC members, Jeanine Normand and Ellen Seiler!

In September we are planning to resume Voter Registration efforts at the County's largest food pantry, in County libraries, and at campuses of Coastal Alabama Community College.

LWV OF EAST ALABAMA

by Cory Unruh, Vice President

The League of Women Voters of East Alabama has been enjoying a mellow summer this year after a very busy and exciting 2020. With monthly programs paused until August, our Board has continued to meet to plan speakers, events, and service projects for 2021-2022 centered around our annual program theme of "Sustainability." In June, we were invited by the Lee County NAACP to participate in a roundtable discussion with local leaders to discuss the American Rescue Plan and how it is meant to impact our local community. We ushered in July with the triumphant return of our Hot Topics in-person gathering! LWVEA members and friends were invited to an outdoor happy hour at a local brewery to discuss the hottest topics in local, state, and national politics. We all enjoyed a lively discussion, and were all so happy to get to see each other in person and not over Zoom. To wrap up July, our board met with Dr. Zillah Fluker to start discussions about our chapter's DEI strategy in our advocacy efforts. Lots of activity in our

college community as students are beginning to return to campus and calendars are filling up. We celebrated Women's Equality Day in August. Program meetings start up again in September.

LWV OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM

from Dana Ellis

The LWVGB has been very busy recently and I am proud of all of the work which has been accomplished. We had wonderful board orientation meetings (thanks, Ida Tyree-Hyche) and the board is off and running!

Highlights of the work include projects done in collaboration with other community groups. It is exciting to be able to collaborate with these groups! These projects include:

- Outreach to the greater than 20,000 people purged from the voter rolls in Jefferson County. This outreach included postcards and phone banking to ensure that people are aware that they have been purged and given the opportunity to re-register if appropriate.
- By invitation of the Birmingham Field Office of the Bureau of Pardons and Paroles, we have staffed an information table so that we can interact with people on probation and parole and explain their voting rights. Multiple individuals have been registered to date. We have also assisted others with completing their CERV applications to restore their rights. This work continues.
- Staffing a voter registration/restoration table at the Elect Fest in Linn Park on Saturday, 8/7. Birmingham municipal elections were on Tuesday, 8/24

We are excited to announce that students at Samford University are seeking permission to have an LWV unit established at Samford. We hope that they will soon receive word that they have been approved for provisional status.

LWVGB published a virtual voter guide at VOTE411.org on 8/12. It provided citizens of Birmingham with information about races and candidates on their ballots in the 8/24 municipal election. Races for Birmingham mayor, city council (9 districts), and board of education (9 districts) were covered, to include 64 candidates. Candidates were invited to enter their campaign information and answer questions important to city and district issues.

LWVGB had planned for a candidate forum in September in advance of the runoff election in October. It was canceled due to candidates' lack of interest in participating.

LWVGB offered a virtual screening of "Line in the Street" on 8/24. This film about redistricting is particularly timely. We're pleased that members from all over the state were in attendance. A recording of the program is [available to view here](#).

LWV OF GREATER TUSCALOOSA

From Carol Prickett

In late June, members of the League of Women Voters of Greater Tuscaloosa were happy to celebrate what looked to be "a new day" in our unit's life by having a lovely evening picnic outdoors...our first time to convene in any manner other than zoom for 15 months. It was lovely to visit in person and we were optimistic about the future. Alas, by the time our next monthly

meeting rolled around in August, we had decided to continue meeting solely on zoom for the foreseeable future. Nevertheless, we have a stalwart group who faithfully show up for our interesting speakers and for sessions with Dr. Fluker. We will revisit our meeting plans if and when the covid situation in Tuscaloosa gets better.

Also in July, we shifted roles and our new Spokesperson is Carol Prickett. Since Carol hosts the monthly zoom discussion of the Local League Leaders, it was decided that the LWVGT Coordinator (3 month rotating terms) would represent our unit at those meetings, and Peggy Hamner stepped up to attend, beginning in August.

In late August, board member Jaclyn Northrup invited us to be one of the sponsors of the University of Alabama's Women's Equality Day celebration. This event was both in-person and virtual and featured Georgia Congresswoman Nikema Williams, former Miss America and candidate for Congress Mallory Hagan, and former UA SGA President Lillian Brand. Following all the marvelous work that LWVGT member Catherine Davies has done to build a terrific LWVAL Advocacy Blog explaining the necessity for People Powered Fair Maps, our Spokesperson entered testimony at the local hearing with the legislators who conducted this process for the state.

LWVGT is looking forward to a productive autumn!

LWV OF VOTERS MOBILE

by Suzanne Schwartz, President

To paraphrase Alica Keys' hit song, "These girls are on fire!" Even without the traditional summer heat of the deep south, the League of Women Voters of Mobile have been on fire with activity.

As we emerged from the constraints and isolation of the last wave of the Covid pandemic, we began the new calendar year by adopting a revision of our by-laws which resulted in a substantial restructuring of our organizational chart. The key changes, to be adopted over the next two years, include the creation of an Executive Committee, a new position for Vice President as well as a President-Elect.

Additionally, we have created eight portfolios, i.e., Events, Policy and Procedures, Advocacy, Membership, Programs, Development, Public Relations (to include social media), and Voter Services. Along with this restructuring we are in the process of creating Procedure Manuals for every aspect of our League operations. This Manual will serve as a step-by-step guide to aid each portfolio manager/chair to consistently fulfill their responsibilities.

Our Program Chair, Donna Rogers, came out swinging with great programs held both in person and via zoom. Included was an exciting two-part look at Women in Government. We heard from Gina Gregory, Mobile City Council Member and Adline Clarke, Alabama State House Representative. Both women talked about the special challenges women have in governance -- the barriers and hurdles they must navigate. They both urged us to work to recruit more women into the public sector to run for office. We also had stimulating presentations on redistricting as well as a one on what you should know before you vote in the upcoming Municipal Election by Wanda Cochran, a former city attorney for Mobile who specializes in municipal government.

Our Municipal Elections will be held on 24 August and what an election cycle it has been! Three of our long-term incumbent city council members will be leaving office. The other four council

seats are all under challenge. Additionally, we have five candidates running for Mayor. In all 30 people are running for office!

Chanele Chapman, our Voter Services Chair, has guided our efforts to bring these candidates before the public to share their positions and vision for the future of our city. The League of Women Voters partnered with Mobile United, another non-partisan, non-profit organization that focuses on leadership through the lens of diversity, equity and inclusion to promote deliberative dialogue to enable our citizens to take necessary steps towards positive action for our community and WKRG5 TV a Nexstar Media Inc., partner. To that end, we have scheduled 7 City Council forums live streamed on WKRG, with News Anchor Peter Albrecht as moderator. On August 16th, a Mayoral Debate will be televised live at 6PM on WKRG5. We are posting these on both our Facebook page and YouTube Channel.

Not to be forgotten, is the hard work of our Vote411 team. They spent countless hours polling League members and other Mobile citizens to find out what their primary concerns are for the city. From this, 5 questions were developed and invitations sent to all 30 candidates to participate in 411.org. With a lot of dedicated, determined work, we launched 411.org on July 30th.

But we're not slowing down. We have lots of exciting programs, dedications and events planned all the way to the year's end. Stay tuned!

LWV OF MONTGOMERY

By Carol Mosely

We talked about what topics would be of interest to members in the coming months and this is what was suggested:

- City of Montgomery government issues (Our focus last year was on county government election officials and processes.)
- Wrap up of the legislative session (Rebecca Jackson offered to compile and present this for us.)
- A legislative forum before next year's session
- Checking in with our county election officials because it's always good to stay in touch with them

We are not meeting during the summer. We will have a new member event in September. We presented at the redistricting hearings that were held in early September.

LWV OF THE SHOALS

From Nancy C. Gonce

The Shoals LWV has held two voter registration events this month in cooperation with the University of North Alabama and the Women's Studies program. We had a table and member volunteers who were available for students and faculty on campus to receive information and to complete information which was then delivered to our Lauderdale County Voter Registration office. The second event has not happened yet but we received a request from the Corporate

Attorney of a local business asking if we could work with them to set up a meeting for employees to learn more about registering & possible absentee options since many were truck drivers and might not know how to request absentee materials. That meeting has not been arranged yet but our group is very interested in working with them. When possible we have had materials at a downtown Florence event called First Friday's which is held on the Main Street with many agencies, crafters, vendors, music, etc which has just started back after not meeting for several months due to COVID restrictions. We have also had events at Northwest Shoals Community College in the past. COVID restrictions has prohibited our voter registration participation at other events/ locations but we do hope to be able to participate again when circumstances permit.



GET INVOLVED!

There are many ways to use your talents in the League, a good place to start is joining a committee with your local League that interests you. We are also welcoming new contributors to the LWVAL Blog, email the blog editor [Catherine Davies](#) for more information. LWVAL is forming a communications team, reach out to [Elsa Roberts](#) if you're interested in joining it.

