

Save the Date:

• **Program Meeting**

Advocacy: Monday, 2/17
@ 6:30PM, Auburn First
Baptist Church

• **Board Meeting**

Monday, 2/24 @ 5:30PM,
660 East Lane

• **Hot Topics Social**

Monday, 3/3 @ 5PM,
Zazu's on Magnolia

• **Hot Topics Lunch**

Thursday, 3/6 @ 11AM,
Toomer's Coffee

See Calendar on Page 6 for
more information

Inside this issue:

94 Years of LWV	2
Hot Topics!!!	3
Legislative Forum	4
Bama Covered	5
GMO Lecture	5
ACS Board Meetings	5
Calendar	6
Observer Corps	6
General info	7

League of Women Voters of East Alabama

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

From the President: A review of the Legislative Forum

The LWV of East Alabama held its Legislative Forum for Lee County Delegates on Monday, January 27th, from 7-9PM in the Auburn City Council Chambers. League member Barbara Patton served as a wonderful and gracious moderator who juggled questions from the League as well as the audience. We were so pleased to have five of our nine delegates present including Speaker Mike Hubbard, Senator Billy Beasley, Senator Gerald Dial, Representative Mark Tuggle and Representative Pebblin Warren. Those who were absent were Sen. Lesley Vance, Rep. George Bandy, Rep. Dwayne Bridges and most notably Sen. Tom Whatley of Auburn.

As I noted in last month's *Voter*, I was hesitant to proceed with the forum since I wasn't sure it was worth the time and effort. I was reminded by Ruth Wright and Carol Daron that the Legislative Forum is one of those outreach events meant for the public as much as it is for our members and that we really should proceed with it. I am pleased that we did! We had about 60 citizens attend the event and I am sure that number would have been much higher if the impending winter weather had not been an issue. We had a nice notice in the O-A News as well as an [editorial](#) espousing the importance of the forum and a [follow-up article](#) after the event. While this last article focused mainly on the education and healthcare questions, we asked a total of 15 questions that went well beyond these two topics. Payday loans, Constitutional Reform, the spay/neuter bill, minimum wage options, Open Meetings laws, Department of Conservation Funds, midwifery and offenses at Tutwiler prison were also mentioned. About half of the questions were penned by the League and the other half came from the audience.

I asked each of the members who attended to send me their impressions of the forum to see what worked and what we need to improve. I was happy to hear from so many of you. Most thought it was well organized and very professional but the lack of follow up questioning was a drawback. Since audience questions were submitted to a review panel for relevance and content, it was not possible immediately to challenge a delegate on his/her answer with a follow-up question. Short of changing the format of the forum to allow for direct questions from the audience, I am not sure how to obviate this problem. At this point, I prefer to have the moderator addressing the delegates in order to control the tenor and pace of the event.

Continued on Page 4

Celebrating 94 Years of Making Democracy Work

Ninety-four years ago on February 14, 1920, pioneering suffragist Carrie Chapman Catt founded the League of Women Voters to secure the right to vote for women. Within just a few months, Congress would grant American women the vote after decades of advocacy.

But that did not complete the League's work – and our work is still not done today. Barriers to the ballot box might look different today, but threats to our democracy remain. Last year, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision which gutted a key component of the monumental Voting Rights Act (VRA) of 1965, but last month members of Congress introduced legislation to update the VRA through common sense solutions.

[Tell Congress you support the Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014.](#)

This bipartisan legislation was carefully crafted to protect the rights of all voters from discrimination and repair the damage to the VRA inflicted by the Supreme Court's decision. The updated legislation seeks to better protect all voters against discrimination and ensure Americans are guaranteed their right to vote.

The modernized VRA will ensure that equal access to the ballot box is about fairness and equality – something that Carrie Chapman Catt knew when she founded the League of Women Voters.

Nearly 100 years after the League was founded, we continue to hold fast to the belief that our nation is at its strongest when the voices of all voters are heard. ***"There will never be a true democracy until every responsible...adult in it, without regard to race, sex, color or creed has his or her own...voice in government,"*** said Chapman Catt. The Voting Rights Amendment Act of 2014 is a critical step to ensure just that.

The League refuses to remain silent as voters across the country face grave barriers to the vote. [Urge your elected officials to support this important legislation and encourage them to act swiftly to move toward final passage.](#)

Thank you for Making Democracy Work®.



Sincerely,

Elisabeth MacNamara
President, League of Women Voters

Hot Topics Social: You Just Missed a Really Fun Time!

Our first Hot Topics Social on Monday, February 10th, was really a delightful event! Thank you to Ruth, Ann, Laura and Neali who joined me to chat about a variety of interesting topics. After a quick review of the Legislative Forum and the many comments I received from members, we delved into some very interesting discussions. One Hot Topic of interest was SB151 introduced by Senator Tom Whatley making bestiality a crime. While everyone agreed that any act against an animal is not OK we couldn't help but wonder why, in this shortened legislative session, this particular bill would be included. Whatever the reason, it made for some interesting conversation.

We also talked about numerous books we had read. Laura and Neali have been immersed in tomes about local civil rights while I have been fascinated by American history, particularly during the time of the American Revolution. Neali just finished *Black In Selma: The Uncommon Life of J. L. Chestnut, Jr.* by J. L. Chestnut and Julia Cass and Laura read [*Outside the Magic Circle: The Autobiography of Virginia Foster Durr*](#). Laura also found time to read about the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the critical involvement of [Jo Ann Robinson](#) in the planning and execution of the boycott. More information about Alabama literature can be found online at the [Encyclopedia of Alabama](#).

Other topics included the gutting of the Voting Rights Act by the Supreme Court (and the effect that has had on Alabama) and even the advent of three-dimensional printing and the consequences, both good and bad, that this technology can bring. I do hope you can join us for the next evening social so you can add your voice to these interesting (and sometimes strange!) conversations. We will meet after 5PM at Zazu's Gastropub on Magnolia on Monday, March 3rd. Please note the change of date. Zazu's offers a range of beverages and food so plan to stay for dinner or just stop by to say hello before heading home. Everyone is welcome!

(submitted by KLDLF)

An Education...

During our Hot Topics Lunch on Thursday, February 6th, Carolyn Schafer, Clara Clothiaux, Sandy Robinson and I talked about a variety of things but education seemed to be the hottest topic! Clara mentioned that she is tutoring students at the Boys and Girls Club at the Boykin Community Center and commented on the issues that some kids are having with basic concepts like multiplication tables. She has a wonderful approach to teaching these kids as she asks a few key questions in order to gauge what they know. I am happy to say that I could answer at least one of her math questions. However, I was at a loss with her question about derivatives in calculus (she also tutors Auburn students). Will this stuff be on the test???

Anyway, we started talking about early education and Clara mentioned a book that she thought was very important to the education system in Alabama. She even sent a copy to Rep. Pebblin Warren and a copy to Governor Bentley! The book is by Diane Ravitch entitled *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice Are Undermining Education* (2010) (ISBN 978-0-465-01491-0). Ravitch talks about the effects of charter schools and high stakes testing and whether they work over the long run. Clara recommends this book and Hot Topics Lunches!

(submitted by KLDLF)

From the President: A review of the Legislative Forum (continued from Page 1)

It was also suggested that we could break down the event into topics with time for an introduction of the salient points and then the questions/answers. This might work better to streamline the issues but might eliminate the options of asking questions after the topic was completed.

While I was hoping for a bigger crowd and more students, I think the forum was a success. The Auburn City Council Chambers worked very well for this event and should be used in the future, if possible. On that note, we should decide if we need a forum every year or every two years. A fair bit of work is involved with these events! We had a lot of people who helped out and I am grateful to them for their time and effort: Ruth Wright, Carol Daron, Marilyn Garrett, Charlotte Ward, Ruth Gynther, Carolyn Tamblyn, Barbara Patton, Ann Moss, Dani Halverson, Julia Morgan, Judy Lechner, Josie Walsh, Carolyn Coker, Sandy Robinson, Neali Vann, John Frandsen, Laura Hill & Kim White.

*Respectfully submitted,
Kristen De La Fuente
President, LWVEA*



2014 LWVEA Legislative Forum Panelists (left, L-R): Sen. Billy Beasley, Sen. Gerald Dial, Speaker Mike Hubbard, Rep. Mark Tuggle and Rep. Pebblin Warren (photo by John Frandsen)

2014 LWVEA Legislative Forum Reviewers (right, L-R): Carolyn Coker, Josie Walsh and Marilyn Garrett (photo by John Frandsen)



Have you heard of "Bama Covered"?



We had a few Auburn University students at our Legislative Forum on January 27th and they mentioned the grassroots group Bama Covered. This nonpartisan, non-profit organization was founded in December of 2013 to enlist the help of

1000 college students to scour the state to talk to people about their healthcare options under the Affordable Care Act (ACA). According to their website (<http://www.bamacovered.org/>), nearly 650,000 Alabamians were uninsured in 2012 and many people are unaware of the details of the healthcare law and their options. Professor Wayne Flynt wrote an article for al.com entitled "[The Sad State of the State's Health Care](#)" and he mentioned Bama Covered while connecting the dots between health, education and jobs. Please take the time to visit the [website](#) and see what these students are accomplishing.

From the AU Daily:

New York Times science writer to discuss 'Frankenfoods and Superweeds' in York lecture Feb. 25

Critically acclaimed science writer and New York Times columnist Carl Zimmer will discuss "Of Frankenfoods and Superweeds: Reporting from the Front Lines of Biology," in a public lecture at Auburn University Feb. 25. Zimmer, who is also a blogger for National Geographic, will speak at 4 p.m. in Lowder Business Building, room 113-A, as part of the College of Agriculture's E.T. York Distinguished Lecture Series and in conjunction with the university's Littleton-Franklin Lecture Series. Zimmer is known for his ability to translate scientific developments into easily understood descriptions. While at Auburn, Zimmer also will speak to campus communications professionals and agricultural communications students and will visit journalism and communication classes in the College of Liberal Arts.

Read more in the [release](#).

Auburn City School Board Meetings Scheduled

Two public hearings will be held February 24th at Pick Elementary and February 25th at Ogletree Elementary each at 6PM to present various ideas for creating new facilities and the costs of these options. The public is encouraged to attend.

Calendar of Events

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

February 17 (Monday) - Member Meeting: Advocacy Anne Permaloff from the LWV of Alabama will be here to discuss the legislative priorities for the state league. She will talk about the current legislative session and the bills that the League is following. Carolyn Carr will also provide some insight into how to effectively communicate with elected officials. This session on Advocacy is a great way to follow up on our Legislative Forum. Auburn First Baptist Church at 128 E. Glenn Ave. (use the College Street parking lot). Social time starting at 6:30PM with meeting beginning at 7:00PM. Light refreshments will be served.

February 24 (Monday) - Board Meeting The LWVEA board will meet at 5:30PM at 660 East Lane, Auburn. All members are welcome to attend.

New Date: March 3 (Monday) - Hot Topics Social We will meet at Zazu's Gastropub on Magnolia starting at 5PM. All members and friends of the League are welcome and encouraged to visit and socialize. Please stop by when you can! We will be there for a few hours.

March 6 (Thursday) - Hot Topics Lunch We will meet at Toomer's Coffee on South College from 11AM until 12:30PM. All members are welcome and encouraged to visit and chat.

March 17 (Monday) - Member Meeting The proposed topic is to view Bill Moyers' "The United States of ALEC" that originally aired on PBS. More details to follow. Auburn First Baptist Church beginning at 6:30PM.

March 24 (Monday) - Board Meeting The LWVEA board will meet at 5:30PM at 660 East Lane, Auburn. All members are welcome to attend.

April 26 (Saturday) - City Fest The LWVEA will register voters and increase awareness of the Photo Voter ID Law. More details to follow.

TBD in April - Annual Meeting The LWVEA will meet for the Annual Meeting in April. Volunteers are needed to assist in planning. Contact [Kristen](#) to volunteer.

Observer Corps

Observers are needed for every meeting.

- [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 City Board of Education](#) - 2nd Tuesday of each month at 6PM in the Multi-Media Room at Auburn High School, 405 South Dean Road
- [Opelika City Schools](#) - 4th Tuesday of each month at 4PM in the Conference Room of the Opelika City Schools Board of Education Office (300 Simmons Street)

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

**LWVEA**

660 East Lane
Auburn, AL 36830

E-MAIL:

president@lwv-eastalabama.org

We're on the Web!

Visit us at:

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

Facebook:

[League of Women Voters of East Alabama](#)

Twitter:

[@lwveasta!](#)

LWV of East Alabama Board of Directors, 2013-2014

Kristen De La Fuente

Sandy Robinson

Carol Daron

Laura Newland-Hill

Linda Shook

Marilyn Garrett

Ruth Wright

Carolyn Carr

Neali Vann

Janet Widell

Ann Moss

Charlotte Ward

President

Vice-President

Secretary

Treasurer & Social Media

Director - Membership

Director - Voter Service

Director - Education

Director - Natural Resources

Director - Public/Media Relations

Director - Healthcare

Director - The Voter Editor

League Consultant (off-board)

Membership Dues - Any time of the Year

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 voter services literature 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

