



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

<b>FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>IRISH MASS TRANSIT</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>OBSERVER CORPS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>TECHNOLOGY TIPS</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UPDATE</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>VOTER ID</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>HEALTH CARE STUDY CONSENSUS</b>	<b>5</b>

**SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:**

- **City Runoff Elections for Birmingham, Tuscaloosa, Mobile, October 8**
- **PSC Public Hearings, October 9, 8:30am, Main Hearing Room at the Carl L Evans Chief Administrative Law Judge Hearing Complex, Montgomery AL**

**FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK  
BY SCARLETT GADDY**

It's been a busy summer for us all as we have combined our summer vacations with League orientations for Board members and other League activities. As you have planned your calendars I hope you have included some historically significant dates that provide us with an opportunity to highlight those things most important to us. National Voter Registration Day was September 24<sup>th</sup> and I hope your League was able to register voters. If you did, send me the number of registrations so I can report them to National. It is not necessary for the registration to have been on the 24<sup>th</sup>. For example, if you registered voters for municipal elections this summer, provide me an estimate of those regis-

trations and I will report them to LWVUS. Though the League registers voters year-round, it is good to participate in national drives supporting voter registration.

September is membership renewal month for our Leagues. Don't forget to send in your dues to your Local League Treasurer! Membership social events are great tools to reach out to potential new members and we spend too little time with each other just enjoying our friendships. Perhaps you have one planned already, if so I hope it goes well and is enjoyed by all.

The LWVUS Membership Leadership Development Program will be rejuvenated in a re-

fresher course here in Alabama. Local Leagues and LWVAL Board members will be participating in a workshop sometime in October or possibly early November to get us reacquainted with the program. Many of our members who were familiar with the program are no longer in membership positions and some have moved away, so we will take this opportunity to refresh ourselves on the details of the implementation of the MLD program. Local Leagues should identify two to three members who can be the coordinators of the program and should plan to have them attend the workshop. We will notify Leagues of the selected workshop date in

*(Continued on page 2)*

**IRISH MASS TRANSIT  
BY GINA O'BRIEN FINNEGAN**

I spent three weeks in Galway, Ireland this summer with my two children. I'd love to import several things back home to Alabama, among them the quaint and bustling city centres (not centers!), gorgeous water-side walkways, with swans, and a clean, efficient and altogether effective public transportation

system.

According to Alabama Arise, our state is one of only five that contributes zero state dollars to support public transportation. That's wrong. Public transportation should not be a last resort option for the poorest urban dwellers. It should be viable,

reliable and available throughout the state.

One aspect of the Irish system that particularly impresses me is that the elderly ride for free. That includes local bus lines, regional bus lines and rail. It's a great way to reward those

*(Continued on page 2)*

**FROM THE PRESIDENT**

*(Continued from page 1)*

the near future. You should be hearing from our Membership Co-Chairs, Barbara Caddell and Jeanine Normand soon. This program is very successful nationally, and has helped many Leagues dramatically increase their membership.

The Health Care Study consensus materials have been released to the Local Leagues and each LL President should have received electronic copies of the materials. The deadline for your return of consensus material

is November 30<sup>th</sup>. The health care issue is a complex one, but we think our study has provided us with good information as we move forward to a consensus position. If you have questions about the consensus process or materials please contact Leonette Slay, Anne Permaloff, or me .

We have much to do this fall and Leonette and I know we'll all be working hard to insure that the things the League of Women Voters believes in are available to all Alabama's citizens. I'll close with a quote from William

James, who said, "Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does."



*Leonette Slay and Scarlett Gaddy are serving as Co-Presidents of the LWVAL this year.*

**IRISH MASS TRANSIT**

*(Continued from page 1)*

who've paid their way for decades, get cars off the street, and help the elderly to remain active and socially



engaged.

I love that my father-in-law, who is in his eighties and

who gave up his car more than a decade ago, can walk half a block from his quiet home and catch a bus every half hour to the city centre, where he normally has lunch. And because the buses and taxis share a traffic lane, delays are uncommon and he can be in the city within 15 to 20 minutes. We met him on the 6:30 a.m. train one Saturday morning and rode across Ireland with him to Drogheda, north of Dublin, to visit a family member.

We took the bus when distances from our city centre apartment were too great for walking. But many destinations were within walking distance, and minutes from our Merchants Road apart-

ment, we found ourselves away from the streets and on a lovely bike/pedestrian sidewalk following the canals across town. Like the buses and trains, the walkways were well populated. We passed people walking to work, students, fishermen, dog walkers and groups of foreign tourists.

A walkable city – especially one that is beautifully walkable – adds greatly to quality of life and healthfulness. It also takes vehicles off the streets and, I believe, contributes greatly to that wonderful bustle that keeps Galway's historic core thriving, even in difficult economic times.

There's no reason our historic cities can't benefit with



that same bustle that is fed by good public transportation and attractive bike and pedestrian routes.

And if we could just get high-speed rail from Mobile to Montgomery and Birmingham...

**OBSERVER CORPS**

**BY BARBARA CADDELL**

This year I would like to activate a state-wide observer corps to monitor the activities of various state boards and commissions. We have found out the hard way that many decisions affecting all Alabamians are made by state agencies with little public notice or opportunity for public comment. As our foremothers well knew, “the devil is in the details” any time that public decisions are made and implemented – and the details need watching.

As you are aware, League observers attend meetings and, as their name implies, watch what goes on and re-

port back to the membership. They do not make statements at the meeting, they just observe. Their mission is two-fold: 1) To inform League members about the activities of the board or commission, and 2) To educate the board or commission about the League of Women Voters. Such monitoring could be a big job, so I want to start small, observing one or two state agencies/commissions. Given our interest in environmental issues, the ADEM commission might be one to start with, along with the Public Service Commission. The State Board of Education is another possibility. These are only suggestions, however.

I would like to hear from you – let me know what agency you would like to monitor and how often you could travel to be physically present at a meeting. Many hands will make light work - several people could take turns attending meetings of one agency and checking the internet for information. I am willing to travel to Montgomery every month to attend whatever meeting we decide upon. Let’s work together to make Alabama’s government more open and accessible to the people! Contact me today so we can get started!!

Interested in the LWVAL Observer Corps?

Contact  
Barbara Caddell  
[caddellh@comcast.net](mailto:caddellh@comcast.net)

1321 Dauphin Street  
Mobile, AL 36604  
251-610-2279

**TECHNOLOGY TIPS**

**BY SCARLETT GADDY**

Now that we have introduced you to Dropbox, I thought we could explore some tools to use with Dropbox. Recently, I read an article called [8 Must Have Tools for Dropbox Users](#), that recommended several tools we could use in our Leagues. The two I thought would be the most helpful were [DropItToMe](#) and [JotForm](#).

[DropItToMe](#) allows you or others you provide the link, to send files directly to your Dropbox account. League Voter editors would find this very helpful when gathering the articles for their Voter publications. Research on

local study topics could be easily added to the common folder for all to read.

[JotForm](#) software allows you to create forms for your web site that can be completed by users online and sent to a Dropbox folder where you can collect and process them. Membership applications or requests for Ed funds are two possible uses for JotForm. To check on these Dropbox – related tools, click on the icons to the right. There are numerous tutorials on YouTube for these to aid you in the installation and implementation process.



Mobile League hard at work on questions for candidates for Congressional District 1. From left to right: Cora Cade-Lemmon, Betty Shinn, Myra Evans, Jan Cade, and Andrea Pennington.



## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM UPDATE BY NANCY EKBERG

The Constitutional Revision Commission revised the existing Education Article in the Alabama 1901 Constitution to state the following:

**THE LEGISLATURE SHALL ESTABLISH, ORGANIZE AND MAINTAIN A SYSTEM OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS THROUGHOUT THE STATE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE CHILDREN THEREOF.**

This simple, forward-looking statement clearly expresses what Alabama's Constitution must say about who we are as parents and how fundamental public education is for our children and for the future growth and prosperity of our state. All 49 other states contain clear, explicit constitutional mandates for public schools at public expense. However, Alabama's Constitution was amended in 1956\*to state that, "... nothing in this Constitution shall be construed as creating or recognizing any right to education or training at public expense...."

In the year 2013 it is finally time that we Alabamians decide that our basic legal charter will state for all to read that we are proud to promise a public education for all our children. This is the message we need to send to potential businesses considering relocating to our state and to our military leaders responsible for locating military bases in Alabama.

Although the Constitution Revision Commission has tentatively decided to affirm that responsibility by adopting the above 22 words, **it also voted to make them toothless.** At the last meeting on August 8<sup>th</sup>, by a narrow vote, the Commission approved the above language BUT added at the end these restricting words:

**"... provided that nothing in this section shall create any judicially enforceable right or obligation..."**

The Legislature shall establish a system of public education but with no enforceable right or obligation?

That statement essentially nullifies the

right to an education. No other Article in our Constitution states that an Article cannot be judicially enforced. No other state in this nation has qualifying language that restricts its Education Article from being enforced.

This language prohibits Alabama courts from protecting rights of education for children legislators and parents want to protect and relies on Federal courts to protect those rights instead.

It blurs the division between the three branches of Alabama government, allowing one branch the power to decide what another may do.

This kind of language will guarantee that voters will see it as a means of preventing Alabama children from having the right to an education, and they will vote against this Education Article when it is placed on the ballot as a constitutional amendment. Voters rejected Amendment 4 last year, three to one, because they believed that it denied Alabama children the right to an education. They will see these words as doing exactly the same thing and will again reject a revision of our Education Article.

Several groups throughout the state have said they would fight this wording if it reaches the voters. Citizens have said they want our Constitution to provide for public education. The amendment added by the Commission, dilutes that right.

Please contact the Commissioners and tell them to retain just the above, 22-word sentence, and to **remove** the "provided" clause mentioned above. The Commissioners who voted for this proviso did so out of their unfounded fear of future court actions regarding equitable school funding. However, the Alabama Constitution was amended to prevent the effectiveness of a state court funding order unless the Legislature specifically agreed to it, and nothing this Commission does has any effect on a federal court interpreting federal law. Also, tell them you want your child to benefit from a strong system of public schools and

that this is assured by balancing the responsibilities of our three co-equal branches of government.

Our courts, with popularly-elected judges, should retain the ability to enforce the state's responsibility to a public education for our children.

**Voted to add the disabling "provided" clause; ask them to vote to remove it:**

Jenna Bedsole, Birmingham, [jbedsole@bakerdonelson.com](mailto:jbedsole@bakerdonelson.com)  
Gov. Robert Bentley (by proxy), Tuscaloosa, [rebecca.boykins@governor.alabama.gov](mailto:rebecca.boykins@governor.alabama.gov)

Greg Butrus, Birmingham, [gbutrus@balch.com](mailto:gbutrus@balch.com)

Rep. Randy Davis, Daphne, [rmdavis14@aol.com](mailto:rmdavis14@aol.com)

Vicki Drummond, Chair, Education Committee, Jasper, [vickidrummond50@gmail.com](mailto:vickidrummond50@gmail.com)

Rep. Paul DeMarco, Commission Vice-chair, Homewood, [pdemarco@pljpc.com](mailto:pdemarco@pljpc.com)

Speaker Mike Hubbard (by proxy), Auburn, [jason.isbell@alhouse.gov](mailto:jason.isbell@alhouse.gov)

Matt Lembke, Birmingham, [mlembke@babco.com](mailto:mlembke@babco.com)

Rep. Cam Ward, Alabaster, [camjward@aol.com](mailto:camjward@aol.com)

**Voted to support the simple 22-word sentence; thank them!**

Gov. Albert Brewer, Commission Chair, Birmingham [apbrewer@samford.edu](mailto:apbrewer@samford.edu)

Phillip Brown, Birmingham, [pbrownalm-gop@yahoo.com](mailto:pbrownalm-gop@yahoo.com)

Senate Pres. Pro Tempore Del Marsh (by proxy), Anniston [ryan.cantrell@alsenate.gov](mailto:ryan.cantrell@alsenate.gov)

Carolyn McKinstry, Birmingham, [cmckinstry@bellsouth.net](mailto:cmckinstry@bellsouth.net)

Jim Pratt III, Chair, Education Text, Birmingham, [jim@hwnn.com](mailto:jim@hwnn.com)

Sen. Quinton Ross, Jr., Montgomery, [Quinton.ross@alsenate.gov](mailto:Quinton.ross@alsenate.gov)

## ALABAMA VOTER IDENTIFICATION (ID) PLAN - EDUCATE THE PUBLIC! BY SHIRLEY ANN RAWLS

On Jun 28, 2013, the Secretary of State (SOS) released the proposed 2014 plan for implementation of photo voter ID in the form of administrative rules. Comments from the public were due September 4, 2013. The LWVAL's co-presidents submitted comments on the Proposed Photo ID Implementation on behalf of the organization..

The final Voter Photo ID Plan will have a major impact on voting and elections in Alabama. The LWVAL encourages state chapters to continue developing projects to educate the public on the new Voter ID Requirements, which begins in the June 2014 Primary. On August 20, 2013, The SOS's Office released a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a Photo Voter Identification System.

The RFP is available online <http://www.sos.alabama.gov/rfp2013/>. The RFP is 18 pages, Section II, The Proposal (pages 11-16) outlines specifics of the ID system to include a Help Desk and Security Privacy Protections. According to the RFP, the system will provide an Alabama voter with a photo voter identification card on the day of application, whether temporary or permanent, in each of the State of Alabama's 67 counties, as well as mobile capability via laptop computer and portable printer.

Secretary Bennett's summation of the purpose of the RFP: "The proposed solution shall serve as the official Photo Voter Identification System for the State of Alabama. This RFP seeks to imple-



ment a statewide uniform, interactive, platform structure that is utilized by the Secretary of State's Elections Division, county Boards of Registrars, mobile users, and anyone else authorized by the Secretary of State to issue free photo voter identification cards."

## CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

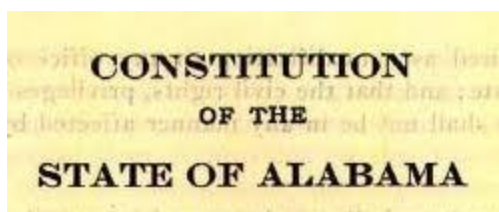
(Continued from page 4)

Rep. Patricia Todd, Birmingham, [reptodd@gmail.com](mailto:reptodd@gmail.com)

**Not present; urge to attend and to support removing the "provided" clause**

Al Agricola, Montgomery, [agricola@rpdas.com](mailto:agricola@rpdas.com)

Sen. Bryan Taylor, Prattville, [bryan.taylor@alsenate.gov](mailto:bryan.taylor@alsenate.gov)



## HEALTH CARE STUDY CONSENSUS BY ANNE PERMALOFF

Last year Local Leagues were alerted to plan for discussion and consensus on the Health Care Study this fall. All Local League presidents now have a copy of the Consensus Questions, the Consensus Report Form, and PDF copies of the three publications produced for the study. The three publications have been on the LWVAL web site ([www.lwval.org](http://www.lwval.org)) for several months and will be available there throughout the consensus discussion period.

Each Local League is asked to return the Consensus Report Form by November 30th. This timing will allow for review of the reports and give the State Board the

ability to determine areas of consensus, if any, at its January meeting. If there is consensus, the Board will also adopt a position statement at the same meeting.

Meetings to discuss study materials and to determine consensus are an important part of the League's grassroots decision-making orientation. The positions determined by this process are used for policy advocacy and guide the State League in its efforts. The State Board urges every member to read the study materials and participate in the process.

Questions about the process may be

directed to LWVAL Co-Presidents Leonnette Slay and Scarlett Gaddy or study coordinator Anne Permaloff.



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF ALABAMA**

P. O. Box 1326  
Tuscaloosa, AL 35403  
Phone: 205 871-8194  
Fax: 205 879-8936  
Email: admin@lwval.org



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**ABOUT THE LEAGUE**

The League of Women Voters is a citizens' organization that has fought since 1920 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. We operate at national, state and local levels through more than 800 state and local Leagues, in all 50 states as well in DC, the Virgin Islands and Hong Kong.

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**M A K I N G   D E M O C R A C Y   W O R K !**

**Officers 2013-2015:**

- Scarlett Gaddy & Leonette Slay, Co-Presidents
- Kathy Byrd, 1st Vice President
- Laura Hill, Secretary
- Shelly Murray, Treasurer
- Barbara Caddell, Director
- Gina Finnegan, Director
- Hattie Kaufman, Director
- Joyce Lanning, Director
- Anne Permaloff, Advocacy
- Jeanine Normand, Advocacy
- Shirley Ann Rawls, Advocacy



**League of Women Voters Mission Statement**

*The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy.*



**League of Women Voters Education Fund Mission Statement**

*The League of Women Voters Education Fund works to encourage the active and informed participation of citizens in government and to increase understanding of major public policy issues.*