



The VOTER

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM
<http://www.lwvgb.org>

OCTOBER 2016

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2016-17?

September was LWVGB Membership Renewal Month. Have you gotten “a round tuit”? We value your membership greatly. Our League has been going and growing strong lately, but we need your renewal to continue. Just look at what we accomplished last year. This video tells it all!

<http://www.lwvgb.org/LWVGB Year in Review video.2015-2016/LWVGB Year in Review 2015-2016 480p.mp4>

And we’re continuing that good work, especially in the vital area of Voter Service in this election year. We’re educating and registering in high schools, colleges and universities, at resource sites for those with disabilities,

CALENDAR OF EVENTS HIGHLIGHTS

Mark your calendar. See this issue or [LWVGB Online Calendar](#) for event details.

October 8: Runoffs for municipal elections as needed*

October 16: LWVGB consensus meeting on LWVAL Payday Loan study. Location @ Vestavia Public Library.

October 24: Voter registration deadline for November 8 General Election

October 24: United Nations Day

November 3: Deadline to apply for Absentee Ballot for November 8 election

November 7: Deadline to deliver or postmark Absentee Ballot (see pg 9 of 2016 [Alabama Voter Guide](#) for exceptions)

November 8: Election Day

November 11: Veteran’s Day

November 29: Giving Tuesday

December 3: LWVGB Holiday Luncheon

December 15: Bill of Rights Day

* does not include Birmingham, Bessemer or Mountain Brook



Pay Day Lending Community Forum and Consensus Building

When: Sunday, October 16th
Where: Vestavia Public Library
Time: 2:30 – 5:00 p.m.

at community health fairs, and more. We’re educating ourselves and the public about Pay Day Lending Stores in Alabama. We will soon take member consensus and contribute our voice to the state position. Only members will participate in consensus taking. We don’t want you to miss out! See this Voter for the many current projects and activities of your League. We cannot do it without YOU! If you haven’t done so already, please renew online today at:

<http://www.lwvgb.org/about/dues/>

or if you prefer to pay your dues by check, please mail your check made out to LWVGB to:

**Rev. Albert Hyche,
LWVGB Treasurer
P.O. Box 530522
Birmingham, AL 35253**

Dues are \$55 for an individual, \$75 for two in a household, or \$27.50 for students. Thank you for your membership and for your support!

PRESIDENT'S PARAGRAPHS

Jean Johnson

What an opportune time to be a Leaguer! I am extremely proud to be associated with this organization that encourages and motivates citizens to actively participate in the democratic process. Read on and you will see how the League of Women Voters is actively giving life to our mission.



Our Voter Service Co-Chairs Nancy Sales and Maggie Howard have been extremely busy recruiting LWVGB volunteers for voter registrations. And the members - and several non-members - have responded! We thank every one of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to register and educate voters. As the saying goes, we're so busy we don't know if we lost a horse or found a rope! Since the last writing of this President's Paragraphs column, the Voter Service volunteers have (wo)maned three registration and election education events. Be sure to read in this issue of *The Voter* about these events. Hang in there, ladies and gentlemen. Voter registration ends on October 24 in Alabama, and we intend to get every registration and update possible between now and that date. Volunteers, thank you for your service, and thank you in advance for those who will volunteer in the 2016 voter registration events to come!

We had such fun at the Annual Cocktail Reception Meet and Greet on Thursday, September 22! We gained new members and many new friends and supporters. Thank you, Membership Co-Chairs Secretary Starr Culpepper and Director Mikesha Harvill for organizing the event and turning out members and guests. Excellent job! And many thanks to [City Club Birmingham](#) Membership Director Jayme Rotch for inviting the League of Women Voters to enjoy that beautiful club free of charge for the evening, including food and drink! CCB even waived the club's initiation fee for any League member or guest who wanted to join the CCB! Read more about the evening and see the photos in this *Voter*.

We take our grassroots seriously. That term is bandied about, but for the League of Women Voters, it is the foundation of our existence and our action. We only take action on an issue after the members have conducted a thorough, unbiased study of an issue, discussed the findings of that study, and come to a consensus decision on what the League's position should be.

We are currently studying Pay Day Lending Stores in Alabama. The LWV of Alabama Study Committee has completed its research on the issue. Ida Tyree-Hyche, immediate past president of LWVGB, a member of the board of directors of the LWV of Alabama, and a member of the state Pay Day Lending Study Committee, will present unbiased study information to members and the public on Sunday, Oct. 16 at 2:30 p.m. at the Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest. She will be assisted by LWVGB member Haley Colson Lewis. The public is invited to learn about this pressing issue, and, if you are a member of the League of Women Voters, you are invited to participate in the consensus taking that will follow that public presentation. Thank you in advance to Ida and Haley for enlightening us on this critical issue. Read more about the study and consensus taking in this issue of *The Voter*.

It's one thing to get people registered to vote, but if they cannot get to the polls, it doesn't count. We're making a limited effort to help in that respect. If you are available on election day, November 8th, consider driving voters to the polls who will otherwise be unable to vote. Contact LWVGB member Chris Underwood at chrisunder31@gmail.com or (205) 515-5704 to volunteer. Thank you for organizing this service, Chris!

The election is drawing close, probably about one month to go by the time you read this. As members of the League of Women Voters, we hope you will do your best to register, inform, and motivate citizens to vote and in every way be active participants in our democracy. Hope to see you at a League event soon!

LWVAL PAY DAY LENDING STUDY & CONSENSUS

Please attend!

Payday Lending Community Forum and Consensus Building
Sunday, October 16, 2016
Vestavia Hills Library in the Forest
1221 Montgomery Highway
Vestavia Hills AL 35216

2:30-3:30 p.m. Payday Lending Community Forum (open to the public)
3:30-3:45 p.m. Break and prepare for closed LWVGB consensus building
3:45-4:55 p.m. LWVGB Membership Payday Lending consensus building (for LWVGB members only)
5:00 p.m. Conclude

The Payday Lending study seeks to present a balanced view of the arguments for and against further regulation of payday loans based on previous studies. The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes political candidates or parties. It takes positions on issues after study, discussion and consensus.

Read "Payday Lending Stores in Alabama: Facts and Issues," the unbiased study report of the LWVAL Payday Lending Study Committee at: <http://www.lwval.org/payday-lending/payday-lending-facts-&-issues.pdf>.

The complete Payday Lending Study Packet is available to members at:

<http://www.lwval.org/leagdemoc/payday-lending/>

This packet includes an overview of the League's consensus process, "Payday Lending Stores in Alabama: Facts and Issues," consensus questions and more. **Members, please review packet materials, especially the Facts and Issues study report and the consensus questions prior to consensus taking on October 16, 2016. If you need access information, contact jjohnson@lwvgb.org.**

The forum and consensus taking will be presented by Ida Tyree Hyche, Esq., LWVAL Study Committee Member and Board Director and LWVGB Member Haley Colson Lewis. The information presented will be provided by the LWVAL Payday Lending Study Committee.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR RIDES TO THE POLLS ON NOVEMBER 8

Can you help seniors and/or handicapped individuals get to the polls on November 8th? Many do not have transportation but very much want to vote. LWVGB wants to coordinate with senior centers to provide rides to the polls, that is IF we get enough League volunteers to help with this service. This will, of course, be a nonpartisan effort. The need is highest in low-income areas of our community. If you can join our transportation team operating that day, please email Chris Underwood at chrisunder31@gmail.com. Riders will be grouped by polling areas.



[flickr/andrewbain](https://www.flickr.com/photos/andrewbain/)



NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY AND MORE

Nancy Sales, LWVGB Director

One hundred ninety four (194) voter registration forms turned in/sent in to Jefferson and other County Registrar offices from twelve (12) events! Most of these we organized, but it includes a few we were invited to participate in. That is a wonderful number. The great majority are first time registrants. Some change of addresses are for persons who have



Smithfield Village Community Center

Lots of thanks to the LWVGB members, friends and family who covered these registration events.

Elyton Village Violence Reduction Kick-off: Chris Underwood, Nancy Sales, Yvonne Brakefield, Barbara Lewis;

Smithfield Community Health Fair: Jean Johnson and Nancy Sales;

Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind Regional Office Workshop: Anne Permaloff, Rita Winkates, Jean Johnson, Nancy Sales;

not voted in years. We shared genuine excitement several times in these events.

Jefferson State Community College-Jefferson Get On Board: Maggie Howard and Jean Johnson;

Jefferson State Community College-Shelby Get on board and Constitution Day: Kaydee Eerdich-Breman, Maggie Howard, Chris Underwood;

Lawson State Community College-Bessemer: Rita and Jim Winkates, Connie Arnwine

Lawson State Community College-Birmingham: Nancy Sales;

UAB: Barbara Lewis, Yvonne Brakefield Knowles, Jan Colson and Maggie Howard;

Kelly Ingram Park: Michael O'Donnell, Leonette Slay, Judith Hand, Kaydee Eerdich-Breman, Sybil Breman Pete and Jean Johnson, Ida Tyree Hyche;

Firehouse Shelter: Nancy Sales

Sigma Kappa Sorority Meeting at UAB: Maggie Howard and Nancy Sales.



Jefferson State Community College

We could not possibly have covered all these times and places without the help of partnering groups. They were UAB Headcount, St. Cecilia Court of the Knights of Peter Claver, Our Lady of Fatima; Magic City Bar Association; Magic City Links; AKA-UEO; and Black Law Students. The energy and enthusiasm were especially visible at Lawson State Community College-Birmingham where 47 persons completed registrations.

Only one further event is currently scheduled: Tuesday, October 11th, 2:00 pm at

Come and help us explain and begin the absentee ballot process for their residents. Be in touch with

[Nancy Sales](#).

If you know of a place we might hold a voter registration before the October 24th deadline for the November 8th general election, let [Nancy](#) or [Maggie](#) know.



UAB



Kelly Ingram Park

REINVIGORATING OBSERVER CORPS: LWVGB AND BEYOND

Haley Colson Lewis and Jean Johnson

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham is seeking to reinvigorate our Observer Corps. LWVGB believes in open and transparent government. A vigorous Observer Corps serves as the eyes and ears of the League to encourage that openness and transparency. By observing and reporting on meetings of public entities, we let our representatives know that we are watching and raising the visibility of their actions. That alone can make a difference in meeting procedure and possibly the outcome. Observer Corps reporting also keeps the League and the public informed when issues of concern are under consideration by the public entity, and with that information, the League can take advocacy or opposition action.

Volunteers needed!

We are looking for volunteers for the LWVGB Observer Corps. Volunteers will be trained and certified. Where a sufficient number of volunteers are available, observers can serve on teams so that observation schedules can be made as flexible as possible. If you are retired or have a flexible school or work schedule, this just might be the League volunteer opportunity for you! You'll have fun working with a sharp, dynamic group of LWVGB members and focusing a little sunshine on Greater Birmingham government policy makers who make decisions affecting our everyday lives. To volunteer for the LWVGB Observer Corps, contact LWVGB Advocacy Co-chairs Ida Tyree-Hyche and Haley Colson Lewis at observer-corps@lwvgb.org.



Collaboration with other civic organizations.

Civic leaders have approached the League to discuss joining forces to form a more robust Observer Corps for the Greater Birmingham community. Our first order of business is to reestablish a strong LWVGB Observer Corps within our own organization. There is strength in numbers, so once LWVGB has established a training, observation, and reporting structure, the LWVGB Board will consider joining forces with other civic organizations to expand the Observer Corps.

On September 15, 2016, an initial group of civic leaders met to discuss the possibility of forming that expanded Observer Corps, what we will here call the Greater Birmingham Observer Corps, GBOC (a temporary name given here to distinguish this group from our own LWVGB Observer Corps). Attending that meeting were Carol Clarke with Rotaract; Ann Florie, President of Leadership Birmingham, member of the Jefferson County Personnel Board, and former member of the Birmingham Water Works Board; Jean Johnson, President of LWVGB; Joyce Lanning, member of the Board of Directors of LWVAL and member of the LWVUS Environmental Task Force; and Haley Colson Lewis, LWVGB Advocacy Co-chair and President of Community Action Committee Young Partners (CAC-YP). Following is a summary of the discussion at that meeting ("We" refers to those present, as previously listed, at this initial planning meeting of the GBOC):

- At least for now, if approved by the LWVGB Board, we will function under the already-established League of Women Voters Observer Corps
- We discussed developing a separate 501(c)(3) in the future, or simply creating an informal network/collaboration (groups mentioned were CAC Young Partners, Rotaract)
- For anyone wearing a Greater Birmingham Observer Corps button (we discussed using the LWVGB button design but changing the design a bit, to highlight "Observer Corps" and include a smaller LWV logo), they must undergo training per LWVGB's established guidance and protocol for LWVGB

Observer Corps.

- We also discussed recruiting "powerful presences" who would occasionally also attend meetings, but not as part of the Greater Birmingham Observer Corps (to take notes), but rather their presence will encourage good behavior by the observed public entity.
- We would like LWVGB members, CAC Young Partners members and all of us who met today [Sept. 15, 2016] (as possible) to undergo training and be Observers. We all also will reach out within our personal networks and undergo other recruitment efforts to attract more volunteers to be Observers.
- We also discussed utilizing LWVGB's existing web presence to post board/commission meeting schedules, who is on the board/commission, what the board/commission does and serve as a place to post reports created by Observers. We also decided there needs to be an additional "hub" for this information, that as time goes on, may have a function beyond simply reporting. This hub, and the LWVGB site, should be viewed as a resource for information. To that end, we will be able to loop in local media (al.com, Weld, TV and radio stations etc.) and possibly Birmingham Watch and other, similar groups to share/utilize the content as well.

Once it is established, the LWVGB Board will review the mission and proposed working structure of the GBOC and consider joining forces with them to put some of these proposed steps into action. The LWVGB Board has not voted to join with this group, but is aware of the initiating group's proposals. Meantime, the core group of the GBOC will continue to meet and plan to finalize details on recruiting Observers. If approved by LWVGB, the GBOC will schedule volunteer training through LWVGB. GBOC will prioritize the boards and commission on which Observers will report and publicize LWVGB's website listing information about the Greater Birmingham Observer Corps and board meetings/notes and create a separate hub for this information to compliment and add more information to LWVGB's site.



We hope you are as excited as we are about the prospect of a prominent, far-reaching Observer Corps for the Greater Birmingham area as we are. First we need to build our own Observer Corps. That's where you come in! Please volunteer today! Contact Ida Tyree-Hyche and Haley Colson Lewis at ObserverCorps@lwvgb.org.

GIVING TUESDAY

November 29, 2016

After the Thanksgiving Feast has been consumed (and the tryptophan has worn off), save back some dollars before Black Friday and Cyber Monday empty your pockets. There's something more important on which to spend your money - the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham! Please remember us on Giving Tuesday, November 29th. #GivingTuesday kicks off the charitable season, and we will fit nicely into your holiday spending plan. You can honor a special loved one (daughter, mother, grandfather,...) with your gift to the League. With your help we will continue "Making Democracy Work"®. And if you give to the LWVAL Education Fund in support of Greater Birmingham projects, you get a tax deduction, too! Win-Win! Please keep LWVGB in mind this holiday season. Thank you in advance!! More detail will be coming in next month's *Voter*.

Black Friday. Cyber Monday.

#GIVINGTUESDAY™

November 29, 2016

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS – THE GO TO SOURCE FOR ELECTION 2016



Did you know that there will be 15 - yes, count 'em 15 - amendments on Jefferson County ballots on November 8th? Fourteen of those will be on Alabama ballots state-wide. Who has time to read up on all those amendments? The League of Women Voters does. LWV of Alabama is researching the amendments and will soon have analyses posted on Vote411.org. Those will be unbiased reviews - "what will happen if this amendment passes" vs. "what will happen if this amendment does not pass." Put in your address at Vote411.org, and you will get those amendment analyses and lots more information about Election 2016 in Alabama, including a voter guide for candidates running state-wide.

That's not all the League has to offer. In February, 2016, LWVGB hosted Decision 2016, a judicial candidate forum to which we invited all 50 (!) Jefferson County judicial candidates. LWVGB Secretary Starr Culpepper put together a [LWVGB voter guide with bios of all judicial candidates](#). Many were eliminated in the Primary Elections in March, but a study of this [sample ballot](#) shows which candidates will be on most Birmingham area ballots in November.

Much more Election 2016 information is available on the League websites at www.lwvgb.org/learn-vote and at www.lwval.org/learn-vote. Another excellent election resource is www.alabamavotes.gov posted by the AL Secretary of State. For example, there you can register to vote online, verify that you are registered to vote, find your polling place, get an absentee ballot, and more. **Urge your friends, family and co-workers to register, be informed, and VOTE on November 8! AND remember to bring [valid photo ID](#)!**

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON Saturday, December 3, 2016

This year our Holiday Luncheon will be a fundraiser for the LWVGB. The Fundraising Committee, chaired by Vice President Arlene Godwin is on the search for a speaker that you will not want to miss. Watch this space next month for details.



ANNUAL LWVGB COCKTAIL RECEPTION

Were you there? Were you at [City Club Birmingham](#) (formerly The Summit Club) on Thursday evening, September 22, for the LWVGB Cocktail Reception Meet and Greet? If not, you missed a very good time. Thank you Jayme Rotch, Membership Director of City Club Birmingham, for the gracious club hospitality. The club opened its doors to the League free of charge, plied us with unlimited food and drink, and offered membership in City Club Birmingham to all League members and guests who attended, free of the initiation fee of \$500!



Our LWVGB Membership Co-Chairs Starr Culpepper and Mikesha Harvill did a magnificent job of inviting citizens in the Greater Birmingham area to this annual Meet and Greet. Thank you, ladies! The event has become an annual tradition that community leaders do not miss. This year, over 90 turned out. To all who attended, the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham greatly appreciates your support, and we would welcome your membership as we celebrate 96 years of "Making Democracy Work!"® Contact Starr and Mikesha at membership@lwvgb.org and ask them how to join, or go online to www.lwvgb.org/join. Membership in the League is open to anyone aged 16 and older. See all the photos of the 2016 LWVGB

Cocktail Reception at the [LWVGB Flickr site](#).



Board of Directors, 2016-18

Jean Johnson	President (2017)
Arlene Godwin	1st Vice President (2017)
Starr Culpepper	Secretary (2017)
Rev, Albert Hyche	Treasurer (2018)
Mikesha Harvill	Director (2018)
Margaret Howard	Director (2018)
Nancy Sales	Director (2017)

Nominating Committee (2017)

Ida Tyree Hyche, Chair
Starr Culpepper

Off Board

Yvonne Brakefield Knowles	VOTER Editor
Ida Tyree Hyche, Chair	Advocacy Committee
Haley Colson Lewis	

QUOTABLE QUOTES

I have to be seen to be believed.

~ *Queen Elizabeth II*

The purpose of fear is to raise your awareness, not to stop your progress.

~ *Steve Maraboli*

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