

VOCAL NEWSLETTER

January 2013



Volume 13, Number 4

Victims of Crime and Leniency

A NOTE FROM STATE DIRECTOR, JANETTE GRANTHAM

What a great night! Our 30th Anniversary Celebration was an evening of enjoyment, entertainment, and excitement! A short film of VOCAL from the beginning to the present was presented by Shelly Liberman. Thanks Shelly! Thanks to all those who worked so hard to make the celebration a success. VOCAL is deeply appreciative to those who sponsored a table and gave donations. We were honored so many came to show their deep respect for Miriam and Edward. Thank you all! See page 6 for photos.

The VOCAL Counseling Center has been renamed The Quenette Shehane Center in honor of Miriam and Edward. We will have a Sign Dedication Ceremony on Miriam's 80th birthday, January 25th. Miriam certainly does not look or act like she is 80 years old. She is a very special lady, and we want to celebrate this special occasion. Please come and join us. Lunch will be provided. Activities will start at 10:00 am with Sign Dedication at 10:30 am, and lunch at 11:00 am. Help Miriam cut the cake. Please join us.

VOCAL welcomes three new board members - Stephanie Billingslea at the Attorney General's Office, Montgomery County Chief Deputy Sheriff Derrick Cunningham, and DA Bill Adair of the 14th Judicial Circuit. We are honored these individuals have volunteered their valuable time to serve on the VOCAL Board. These new members have a passion for justice and great compassion for victims. Welcome.

We have been working hard to get VOCAL caught up to date. Over the years it has been hard for one person to do it all and things got a little behind and disorganized at VOCAL headquarters. We are fast getting back on track, but VOCAL needs help from the Chapters. According to Policy and Procedures, monthly reports are due at State VOCAL by the 15th of the following month. Please join with us in getting VOCAL back in line and running smooth again by sending in the monthly reports.

National Crime Victims' Week is April 21-27. The State Vigil will be Friday, April 26th. Unfortunately, the power point of victims' photos has been lost. If you want the photo of your loved one to be presented at the Vigil, you must send a new photo to State Headquarters. Also please update your memorial and send it also. The address is VOCAL, PO Box 4449, Montgomery, AL 36103.



New Challenges ★ New Solutions

VOCAL State Vigil
Friday, April 26th

Please send photos of your loved one and update your memorial for the Vigil.

National Crime Victims' Rights Week | April 21-27
2013

CHAPTER NEWS

GULF COAST CHAPTER

Chapter President: Tracey Wilson Goens
Phone (251) 533-6832, Email t.goens@mchsi.com
Chapter Mailing Address: 30379 Maury Court, Spanish Fort, AL 36527

JEFFERSON COUNTY CHAPTER

1st Thursday, 6 p.m.
2200 8th Ave. N, Sheriff's Dept. Training Room, 2nd Floor
Chapter President: Carol Melton (205) 841-1465, Email carolmeltonb@bellsouth.net
Chapter Mailing Address: 4162 51st Avenue North, Birmingham, AL 35217

The chapter held its annual Christmas party on December 6. We had a large crowd which included Jefferson County District Attorneys, Jefferson County Sheriff's Department personnel, and a number of victims. We appreciate so much the assistance of Wanda Miller, Billy Jack Logan, Gloria Turner, Margie Caslin, and Majeedea Amodadeen. The food was wonderful and we had a great time.

Flo Sargent, a VOCAL member for many years, passed away on December 20. She was buried on December 22. We will miss her.

December 21 Wanda Miller and chapter president, Carol Melton, attended a breakfast at the Harley Davidson Building with the Eastern Area Caravan and they had a donation for us. They had a really nice breakfast and we sang Christmas carols.

We attended a hearing in a DUI case. The victim was hurt very badly and was trying to keep the offender in for five years. The judge did not give her decision that day and the victim and her father are from Georgia. They still don't know the outcome and very disappointed.

NORTH CENTRAL ALABAMA CHAPTER

Chapter Coordinator: Teresa Lindsey
Phone (205) 466-5777, Email dlindsay@hopper.net
Chapter Mailing Address: 132 Mt. Carmel Road, Altoona, AL 35952

RIVER REGION CHAPTER

1st Sunday monthly, 2 p.m.
VOCAL office, 422 South Court Street, Montgomery
Chapter President: Darlene Hutchinson Biehl (334) 450-5851, Email DFWeditor@aol.com
Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 240624, Montgomery, AL 36124

Our chapter enjoyed having some new faces at our "Holiday Fellowship" in December and had a great opportunity for fellowship. in December. Chapter president Darlene Hutchinson Biehl served as the emcee for a MADD vigil held in Montgomery; we appreciate the partnership of other victim service agencies and salute the work they do.

Catina Jones and her family attended the sentencing in January of the defendant convicted of killing her mother Julie Ann Nelson. Jennings was sentenced to life without parole. It has been our honor to assist Catina through this process. The Montgomery DA's office did a super job on this case and many others they are currently handling.

A capital murder trial in Lawrence County is expected to begin this spring. In December 2009, Mr. & Mrs. Nichols were killed in their home; their daughter Rachel lives in Elmore County and is a member of our chapter. Our thoughts and prayers are with this family: They have not only had the "criminal" justice system to deal with, but also the "civil" justice system, but the DA in north Alabama has done a great job keeping them informed. Many thanks to our friends in the Shoals VOCAL Chapter for helping support this family.

Many of our members still have pending cases and we know they appreciate our prayers. Our next meeting will be Sunday, February 3 at 2 p.m. and we're planning to serve a variety of stews & soups, ideal for this winter weather. Please join us.

SHELBY COUNTY CHAPTER2nd Saturday in Feb., Apr., Jun., Aug., Oct., Dec.

Owens House, Columbiana; 2 p.m.

Chapter President: Mitzie Wheat, (205) 668-0636, Email mwheat@bellsouth.net

Chapter Mailing Address: P. O. Box 32, Columbiana, Alabama 35051

Chapter members attended a parole hearing on December 8 for Michael Davis. Davis is incarcerated for burglary and attempted murder. Parole was denied for five years. Members also attended the hearing for George Soule III who was convicted of DUI murder in the death of Darryl Kimbrel. We were so pleased that his parole was denied.

Ten chapter members attended the 30th Anniversary Celebration for VOCAL. It was a wonderful evening of celebration and recognition of the accomplishments of the organization. It was also a great tribute for the sacrifices of Edward and Miriam Shehane. So many victims across this state have benefitted from their commitment to improving the lives of crime victims.

We are pleased that George Wallace, Jr. will be speaking at our next chapter meeting on February 9. We welcome all to attend. We are also planning our candlelight vigil for Victims' Rights Week. The vigil will be held on Monday, April 22, at 7 p.m. at Shelby Christian Fellowship (located at 210 North Main Street in Columbiana). Paul DeMarco, representative for Jefferson County, will be our speaker for the vigil.

SHOALS CHAPTER2nd Tuesday monthly, 6:30 p.m., Open Door Fellowship, 640 Co. Rd. 323, Florence

Chapter President: Denny Kimbrel (256) 757-1354, Email bamafnatk@aol.com

Chapter Mailing Address: 442 County Road 111, Killen, Alabama 35645

Richard Russell (Colbert County) was convicted for Manslaughter, 2nd Degree Assault of Mrs. Campbell, and No Driver's License. He was sentenced to 18 years for the death of James Campbell from the Elgin area in Lauderdale County. At sentencing it came out Russell had 5 previous DUI's. Mr. Campbell's wife and son told Judge Gill Self and Russell about the impact this had on them. The Campbell family had hoped for the maximum sentence of 20 years for the manslaughter conviction and an extra year for each of the other two charges. We supported the Campbell family throughout the trial. We wish to express appreciation to the Alabama State Troopers and Lauderdale County District Attorney Chris Connolly and his VSO Deanna Tidwell for doing such a good job and working closely with this wonderful family.

On December 18, Johnnie and Denny Kimbrel attended the second parole hearing of George Soule III for the November 21, 1999 DUI death of their Darryl Kimbrel (age 31) in Florence. Soule was arrested for Murder DUI, convicted for the Murder DUI and sentenced to 25 years by Judge Mike Jones. Thanks to the Parole Board for denying Soule's parole for 3 years. Denny and Johnnie Kimbrel want to express their thanks to the following: the Jury for the conviction, Lauderdale County DA Chris Connolly and his VSO Deanna Tidwell, Alabama Attorney General Luther Strange's VSO Doris Hancock, and VOCAL's Miriam Shehane and Janette Grantham for their support.

On January 22, we will be going to a parole hearing to support Sarah Thompson and her family. Sarah's sister "Sidney Carson Cox" was murdered by Christopher Berry. Berry entered a guilty plea to Manslaughter and received a 20-year sentence. This is Berry's first parole hearing. His end of sentence date will be 2026. Sarah and her family plan to stay at VOCAL Angel House. We are so grateful that VOCAL provides a place for victims to stay when attending parole hearings.

Victims of Crime and Leniency

Established in 1982

A 501c3 Non-Profit Organization
Janette Grantham, State Director

VOCAL is an advocacy group for victims' rights consisting of concerned citizens, victims of crime and their families, law enforcement officers, attorneys, and others interested in reducing crime and improving the plight of its victims.

VOCAL

422 South Court Street

P.O. Box 4449

Montgomery, AL 36103

1-800-239-3219

(334) 262-7197

Fax: (334) 834-5645

E-mail: vocalonline@yahoo.comWebsite: www.vocalonline.org

Chapters include Gulf Coast, Jefferson County, North Central Alabama, River Region, Shelby County, Shoals, and Southeast Alabama.

The VOCAL NEWSLETTER is published bi-monthly in January, March, May, July, September, and November. Annual VOCAL membership dues include subscription. Send news items to Mitzie Wheat, Editor, at the VOCAL address or mwheat@bellsouth.net.

We have a few murder and capital murder trials coming up soon, and our chapter members will be there to support the families. Brandon Hydrick (age 26) from Madison County was killed in a senseless and crazy act when Joel Moyers (age 56) shot through the back of Brandon's truck with a high-powered rifle. Brandon and his brother were passing by Moyer's house in September 2012 when Moyers shot Brandon. Moyers was indicted for capital murder. The family of Andrew Beach (age 24) from Madison County is waiting for an indictment and arrest in the July 20, 2012 DUI death caused by Gerald Larkins Gibbs. Gibbs was charged with DUI, but has not been arrested. Andrew had stopped, waiting to make a turn when traffic cleared, when Gibbs hit Andrew from the rear at a very high rate of speed. The Beach family has told of what a good job the State Troopers have done in the case. We were contacted by the Beach family after Darlene Hutchinson Biehl gave them our number at the MADD Candlelight Vigil in Montgomery. Thanks Darlene for providing the family with our information.

MaryAnn Rippey's dad, Hoyt Sledge Sr. (age 81), passed away on December 14, so please keep the family in your prayers (Mary "Connie" Sledge, wife of Hoyt for 60 years, sons and daughters and extended family). Each Sledge family member worked hard at starting the Shoals Chapter after their son and brother, Danny Sledge, was murdered on March 12, 1999. Many families from the Shoals area have benefitted from the work of the Sledge family and other victims' families.

We all want to express our thanks to Mitzie Wheat for working so hard and doing a great job with the newsletter.

SOUTHEAST ALABAMA CHAPTER

3rd Tuesday monthly, 6 p.m.

Wiregrass Angel House, 105 N. Bell, Dothan

Chapter President: Becky Schuler (334) 983-5598, Email becca82380@live.com

Chapter Mailing Address: P.O. Box 354, Pinckard, AL 36371

**CHAPTERS REMEMBER YOUR
MONTHLY REPORTS ARE DUE BY
THE 15TH OF THE MONTH.**

**PLEASE MARK YOUR TAX
RETURNS TO GIVE A
DONATION TO VOCAL.**

VOCAL--Victims of Crime and Leniency, P.O. Box 4449, Montgomery, Alabama 36103

2012 - 2013

Name _____ Title _____

Agency or Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Telephone (Office) _____ (Home) _____ Email _____

Victim's Name _____ My Relationship to Victim _____

Date of Crime _____ Nature of Crime _____

City and County of Crime (City) _____ (County) _____

Type Membership: Regular \$25 Agency/Organization \$50

Are you available and interested in volunteer work? Yes No

NAME OF LOCAL CHAPTER (Circle): Gulf Coast Jefferson North Central River Region Shelby Shoals Southeast

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

Can people in our respective neighborhoods and communities learn to treat others with respect and to abide by laws enacted to protect the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness for all? That is a question that deserves serious consideration. Whatever our social, economic and intellectual status might be, each and every one of us belongs to the human race. Whatever nationality, cultural background or "racial" classification we might identify with, we are all members of the human species or more simply put, human beings. It is simple enough to discern the differences among various life forms, such as, for example, humans, dogs, cats, horses and other life forms. Respecting others and their rights under our laws only works to the extent there is some appreciable degree of mutuality and reciprocity. That being said, adapting our behavior to conform to the laws designed to protect and nurture the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness is equally important and necessary if we are to enjoy relatively safe and viable neighborhoods and communities to live, work and raise families in.

Moving from the more general values and ethical concerns mentioned above, most will agree that life is far from perfect or ideal, at least some of the time. Everyone is faced with challenges, disappointments, heartbreaks, and issues of one sort or another during the course of their lives, and some more than others. The focus of this particular essay is tackling the issue of violent crimes in our neighborhoods and communities. This writer believes respect for and toward others (to use a colloquial expression, warts and all) combined with adapting our behavior to conform to the laws mentioned earlier are prerequisites for any plans and programs of action to be successful in modifying the criminal inclinations of many in our neighborhoods and communities.

Most of us have heard the phrase "keep it simple." We don't need big programs and big bucks to make this work. Human beings are capable of learning. Humans are also creatures of habit. This can be both advantageous and developmental, and disadvantageous and destructive. It is advantageous that we don't have to re-learn to drive every day to commute to work. It is disadvantageous that we learn to drive while intoxicated or in a reckless and dangerous manner. It is advantageous that we learn to share and have friends. It is disadvantageous that we learn to take from others or harm others solely for our own pleasure or benefit. It is advantageous and socially adaptive that we learn to negotiate and settle differences peacefully or through the courts if all else fails. It is disadvantageous and maladaptive that we learn to use violence to settle conflicts.

As mentioned earlier, we are capable of learning and forming habits. Think habits of social interaction. Take it a step forward and think habits of mutuality and reciprocity of respect for one another in our neighborhoods and communities and adapting our behavior to conform to and abide by the laws enacted to provide for and protect our pursuit of life, liberty and happiness. Intervention and prevention work best by providing alternative measures early in life. Whatever your skill sets or talents, a child can benefit from your commitment to making a difference in how and what they learn. Reading clubs on Saturday mornings, basketball games on Saturday afternoons or evenings, soccer games, chaperoning trips to the zoo -- put your thinking cap on. Doing something for the same children on a regular basis will make a difference. Long term, habits of thinking, behavior and social skills (including conflict resolution) can be taught and will develop and make a difference in our neighborhoods and communities - one child or a group of children at a time.

E. P. Sammons, MPA, MS, LPC - Counselor, VOCAL Angel House



IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS A
VICTIM OF CRIME, **HELP IS AVAILABLE.**

National Crime Victims' Rights Week | April 21-27
2013

VOCAL'S 30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



CANDLELIGHT VIGIL VICTIM'S TESTIMONIAL

VOCAL will produce a testimonial booklet for the Candlelight Vigil to be held on Friday, April 27, in Montgomery during National Crime Victims' Rights Week. If you wish to include a brief memorial or tribute statement in this booklet, complete the following form and mail or fax to the VOCAL office by April 6.

PLEASE PRINT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO VICTIM: _____

IN MEMORY/HONOR OF _____ WHO WAS
(CIRCLE ONE) (NAME OF VICTIM)

_____ ON _____
(NATURE OF VICTIMIZATION) (MONTH/DAY/YEAR)

BRIEF MEMORIAL OR TRIBUTE STATEMENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO HAVE INCLUDED IN THE TESTIMONIAL BOOKLET:

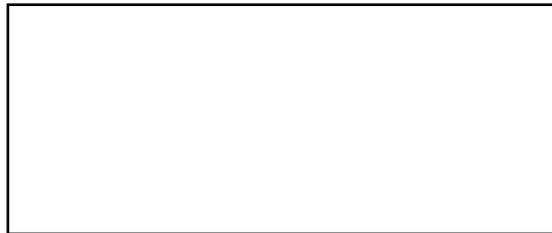
WILL YOU ATTEND THE CANDLELIGHT VIGIL IN MONTGOMERY ON 4/27/2013? _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO:
VICTIMS OF CRIME AND LENIENCY
P. O. BOX 4449
MONTGOMERY, AL 36103-4449
Fax 1-334-834-5645

Visit our website at www.vocalonline.org
VOCAL/Angel House
422 South Court Street
P.O. Box 4449
Montgomery, AL 36103

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Senator Billy Beasley Rosa Davis Louise Holder Sandra Hutchins Judge Pete Johnson City of Montgomery Montgomery County Mt Pleasant Christian Church Thomas Richardson	Pat Roberts Anne Seymour Miriam Shehane DA Doug Valeska Carol Webb Frank M. Wilson PC In Honor of Miriam Shehane David Schwartz	Memorial for Bob Bryant Judith Crosby Memorial for Lynn Holland Wayne & Peggy Olmsted Memorial for Paul Little Doris Little Memorial for Rusty Roberts Shoals Chapter VOCAL	Memorial for Richard Schwartz David Schwartz Memorials for Miles Hoyt Sledge, Jr. Charles & Eleanor Gibson Lorraine & Michael Gibson Shoals Chapter VOCAL Memorial for Chris Smith Freya Bailey for George Smith
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VICTIM CONTACTS Governor Robert Bentley State Capitol Montgomery, AL 36130 Taylor Vice, Director Constituent Services (334) 242-7100 1-800-591-4217	Attorney General's Office of Victim Assistance 501 Washington Avenue Montgomery, AL 36130 Patricia S. DeBortoli Victim Services Director (334) 242-7300 1-800-626-7676 www.ago.state.al.us	Department of Corrections Kim T. Thomas, Commissioner P.O. Box 301501 301 South Ripley Street Montgomery, AL 36130 Stephanie Hust Victim/Constituent Services (334) 353-3871 www.doc.state.al.us State inmate parole info. 1-888-726-9799, Option 4	Alabama Crime Victims Compensation Commission Dr. Cassie Jones Director P.O. Box 231267 Montgomery, AL 36123 1-800-541-9388 www.acvcc.state.al.us	State of Alabama Board of Pardons & Paroles Cynthia Dillard, Director P.O. Box 302405 Montgomery, AL 36130-2405 Debra Bonds Victim Services Rep. (334) 242-8050 Fax (334) 353-7701 www.pardoles.state.al.us
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