



Louisiana Open Carry Awareness League November/December 2013 Newsletter

November is gone and the New Year is rapidly approaching! We are looking forward to a great year in 2014 and continued growth for our organization. We have grown to cover the greater Louisiana Area and our membership continues to slowly increase as well.

- **Elections**

It looks like an entirely uncontested sweep in this year's officer elections as all are unopposed! The official **LOCAL Officer Nomination 2013** thread can be found [HERE](#).

- **December Meetings:**

Shreveport area- The Northwest Chapter of LOCAL will meet at Sue's Country kitchen, 4600 East Texas, Bossier City, LA 71111 at 6:30 pm on Wed. Dec 4th.

LaPlace - The Southeast Chapter of LOCAL will meet at the IHOP restaurant, 220 Belle Terre Blvd, LaPlace, at 6:30 pm on Wed. Dec 11th.

Florida Parishes - The Florida Parishes Chapter of LOCAL will meet at Hog Heaven Smokehouse, 83512 Louisiana 21, Sun, LA at 6:30 pm on Monday, Dec 16th.

Baton Rouge - The Baton Rouge area LOCAL meeting will be at the IHOP restaurant on College Drive in Baton Rouge, La, at 6:30pm on Wednesday, Dec 18th.

Other meeting dates and locations will be announced when planned.

- **Upcoming Gun Shows:**

Dec 7-8 Kenner, LA
Dec 14-15 Lafayette, LA
Dec 21-22 Bossier City, LA
Dec 28-29 Alexandria, LA
Jan 25-26 Kenner, LA

Speedy Mercer
League VP, President, Northwest Chapter of LOCAL
Shreveport, LA

- **From The President**

First I want to apologize to our members for not getting out a November newsletter. As with many volunteer groups things sometimes get pushed back. Whether by family or work obligations or running around for the holidays it just seems like the month is gone before we know it. I want to thank Speedy Mercer, LOCAL VP and NW Chapter President, for keeping our feet to the fire and pushing the officers to put something together for the newsletter each month.

Officer Nominations

I want to thank those members who went to the forum and made their voice heard in the Officer Nomination thread. I was nominated again for President. Speedy Mercer was nominated again for Vice President. Phillip Heustis was nominated to remain our Secretary/Treasurer. No other nominations were made so all 2013 officers will remain in place for another year.

LOCAL Growth

The past year has seen us grow as an organization. We have thousands of people who have found our Facebook page and our main webpage. We have people across the state asking about meetings and asking for information about Open Carry. By the last week of November we had over 140 paid LOCAL members. We are reaching out to other gun groups and trying our best to get our message out. There is still much work to do. I have ordered a LOCAL coffee mug from our online store and am going to donate it to be given away to a member when we hit 150 paid members. We will pick a random number between 1 and 150 and the member with that number will win the mug. So if you know someone who is not a member but has been thinking about joining, now is the time. Sign up a friend or family member. Numbers mean power in the gun rights battle. Go to <http://laopencarry.org/join.shtml> and fill out the online application there and then either use the PayPal system or mail in a check or money order.

Meetings

In the past year we have seen both an increase in the number of meetings and the decrease in numbers of people attending those meetings. We are always being asked to have meetings in different areas so that people can meet and socialize. When we schedule the meetings few people actually show up. We will continue to host meetings across the state. The number of meeting sites is going to grow. We have been hosting monthly meetings in LaPlace, Shreveport, Baton Rouge and in various locations in the Florida Parishes. In 2014, we hope to include meetings in Lake Charles, Metairie, Lafayette and even Monroe. This will take work by our members who have stepped up to host these meetings but we hope that it leads to more activity and more awareness of

Open Carry.

Open Carry Incidents

We have done lots of work as a group to educate the public about the legal right to open carry. It is tempting to think that our efforts have resulted in citizens being able to go about their day with a holstered handgun and not have any problems occur. Sadly we are not there yet. In the past month LOCAL has been contacted by people who have been given incorrect information about the right to carry, have been asked to leave businesses and in at least one case, arrested while open carrying. There is still a possibility that you can be doing everything right and be taken to jail simply because you have a pistol on your belt. It is vital that anyone planning on carrying a gun in public be knowledgeable about the laws and have a lawyer who will take their case should an arrest be made. LOCAL has referred citizens to lawyers we feel are willing and able to assist them after an arrest for Open Carry. While we don't mind doing this, the fact is we shouldn't have to. We shouldn't have to because each of us should, as part of our planning to carry a gun, have found a gun friendly lawyer. More importantly, we shouldn't have to because we shouldn't be seeing law abiding gun owners arrested for the lawful act of open carry. In 2014 we need to make another publicity push and remind law enforcement agencies of the law and our efforts to defend those exercising their rights.

Publicity Efforts

While many of our members don't currently use sites such as Facebook or Twitter the fact is, billions of people do. Many retail businesses have skipped putting up web pages and instead or using social media sites such as Facebook to advertise and get their product out to the masses. We have been using social media to get our message out to the public. Speedy and I try to post something relevant to LOCAL or Open Carry in Louisiana at least once a day to LOCAL's Facebook wall. Our meetings are announced there as well as on other sites such as Twitter, Meetup.com and even Craigslist. People are finding us via these sites and are joining LOCAL or coming to meetings. We will continue to use social media as much as possible.

We have also been trying to get our pamphlets into as many hands as possible. We have several instructors who teach conceal carry or tactical classes who are giving our pamphlets to their students. The pamphlet holders that Speedy ordered have been a big hit. We have our pamphlets proudly displayed in them at businesses from one end of the state to the other. We have made an effort to get out pamphlets out at more gun shows but this has really fallen off. Speedy takes pamphlets to the shows in Shreveport and I am going to the shows in Gonzales. Our Lake Charles coordinator, Riley, handed out about 200 pamphlets at a gun show there recently. Other than that we have been hit or miss with gun shows. We have shows in Lafayette, Kenner, Slidell and Alexandria on a pretty regular basis. We NEED members in these areas to volunteer to get our pamphlets out to those shows. IF you are willing to help, please let us know. Riley mentioned that, when he was handing out pamphlets in Lake Charles, he had several people comment that they were not aware Open Carry was legal. I often hear the same in Gonzales and have had people ask for extra pamphlets to give to friends. This is a simple and effective method for informing the public. With our reduced printing costs

from using the Office Depot Corporate account Phillip set up for us; the pamphlets only cost 2 cents apiece. It's cheap but effective.

Happy Birthday LOCAL

In early 2009 many of us were organizing meet-ups and talking about open carry on the Open Carry dot Com forum. That year, David Scott, our first Vice President, put up the LOCAL discussion forum for those of us interested in starting a true, organized gun rights educational group. On December 2, 2009, at the Shoney's restaurant in LaPlace, Louisiana the first official meeting of LOCAL forum members took place. There were 10 of us there that night. Most of us only knew each other by our forum screen names and were meeting face to face for the first time. Jerry was appointed as our interim President, a post he would hold for the next 2 years. We discussed membership growth, putting together a list of gun friendly civil and criminal case lawyers, partnering with other gun groups, how we would respond to Open Carry incidents, how we would vet new members and batted around the idea of building a webpage which nobody at the meeting knew how to do.

Looking back at the minutes from that first meeting I see how far we have come and how many of the ideas we came up with are still going. We are still compiling and updating our list of pro-gun lawyers. We are constantly working on growing membership. We continue to reach out to other gun groups. We regularly offer advice and respond to those involved in open carry incidents.

Many of our original members have handed the regions off to others and moved on. Some are still active and some have dropped from the radar. I look at the minutes of past meetings and stare at the photos on our album often. I see the faces of those who saw a place for a gun rights group which could educate the public about the right to bear arms in Louisiana. I hear the conversations we had over dinners as we planned our letter campaigns or discussed gun show tables. I remember guys like Jarrod who put together our first fund raiser, a raffle for a shotgun. I see Jerry sitting there keeping the meetings on track with parliamentary procedure that most of us only vaguely remembered from high school civics class.

I hope that they would be proud of the way LOCAL has grown. I hope that they see all of the work done by members who have joined in the past 5 years to continue fulfilling the LOCAL Mission. We have a great list of members. We have over 140 honest, responsible, law abiding citizens who are helping educate the public as they learn from each other. We enter our 6th year stable and strong. We have accomplished much and there is much still to do. Happy Birthday LOCAL.

Have a safe and happy holiday season.

Steve Raacke,
LOCAL President.

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- **Lake Charles Rep, Riley Belile**

Riley Reports:

Still working on meeting up with like-minded folks in Lake Charles & establish a regular meeting place & time. Had a meeting with congressman Cliff Landry & all went well. He will be back in Lake Charles next month. Due to weather, work schedules, holidays, etc., have been unable to do all I had planned, but hope reigns eternal. Several police departments have been contacted & all is in agreement with our aims & goals, but will be watching. Work continues, but will be slower than anticipated.

Riley Belile.

- **Northeast Area Rep, Leonard Clark**

I'm leaving our tri-folds as I locate friendly businesses and a photo will be sent soon for posting. I have sent tri-folds to a member in Bastrop and Vidalia respectively. Hopefully after the holidays interest will pick up in our area.

Thanks, Leonard

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