

MAY 2001

## *President's Message*

I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to have served as president of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham. Thank you to all the officers and members of the board for their support over the last two years. I am especially grateful to Sarah McDonald, Rose Packer, and Gayle England—the “Veeps”—for their unwavering strength. They are champions of the League and its principles. I've lost count of how many times each one of them went beyond the reasonable expectation for her office in order to do a superior job—to make our League shine—and it did. This goes for many other board members including Colette Scott, Yvonne Knowles, Jessie Tehranchi. Also, Bev and Ralph Sterling have brought you this outstanding *Voter* for YEARS!

I hope that we'll continue the fight for a good public transportation system for Greater Birmingham, an equitable tax system, home rule, and preservation of our areas natural resources. I've slumped in frustration after futile attempts to influence public policy and government leaders, but then again I've danced a few jigs in triumph along with you. Let's continue to always politely but persistently demand that candidates debate and that elected officials fulfill their responsibilities for the welfare of our citizens. I've found that many won't debate. And, when elected, they often do not take just and equitable positions — League positions. We, as good League members, know how to use our tools of democracy—to speak out on issues and vote to bring about change. Let's be sure that all citizens realize this power in their own loud voice and educated vote.

Yes, it's been challenging as your League president, but in the end, **I** came out the winner because the League has strengthened and enlightened me. You've improved my skills as orator, psychologist, organizer, and leader. You've given me a deeper knowledge of government and public issues, a keen sense of responsibility for the welfare of my “village”—whether it's my community or my world - and the courage to stand up and speak out whenever the situation demands it. Again, I have to thank you for this opportunity of a lifetime. I recommend it to anyone called to fill the position of League president.

Time to look to our leadership for the next biennium. In addition to an outstanding slate of officers and directors, the Nominating Committee has presented you with its recommendation for president of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham. This is Gayle England. As membership vice-president, Gayle has carefully assessed and energetically acted to meet the needs of our organization and its membership. She has not just sought new members, but she has also found innovative ways to diversify and involve all of our membership. And she has never been daunted by the thought that “it's never been done that way before.” If our members elect her as our new president on May 6, the LWVGB will be in good hands. I am confident that she will ably promote the League's program and high ideals in such a way that will increase the strength, visibility, and influence of our League.

I look forward to seeing each of you at State Convention, May 5-6 and then at our own Business Meeting on the afternoon of Sunday, May 6.

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### LAST CALL FOR LWVAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION

**LWVAL Convention is May 5-6.  
Call 967-2829 for registration information.)**

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR NOW ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

The League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham will hold the annual business meeting on Sunday, May 6, 2001 at 1:30pm – 3:30pm. The meeting will be held in the Woodward Ballroom at the Tutwiler Hotel. At this meeting we will discuss and vote on proposed bylaw change, budget and program as suggested in the April Voter. The business meeting will follow the State Convention so we hope to have a good attendance at this meeting.

Make plans to come and thank those going off the Board who have worked unselfishly to make this local League what it is and also to show your support to the incoming Board.

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

The Nominating Committee recommends the election of the following slate of officers and members of the Board of Directors of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham for the 2001-2002 biennium.

**President:** Gayle England  
**1st Vice-President:** Sarah McDonald  
**Secretary:** Yvonne Knowles  
**Director:** Sandra Smith  
**Director:** Diane Holmes  
**Director:** Tracy Heard Brown

Submitted by:  
Helen Rivas – Co-chair  
Leonette Slay – Co-chair  
Jessie Tehranchi

## Board of Directors 2000-2001

### PRESIDENT

Jean Johnson 870-3063

### 1st VICE PRESIDENT ADVOCACY/PROGRAM

Sarah McDonald 967-2829

Betty Likis 822-3677

Anne Findley Shores 933-6466

Jessie Tehranchi 822-5615

### 2nd VICE PRESIDENT COMMUNITY SERVICES

Rose Packer 592-2729

Yvonne Knowles 322-8337

Colette Scott 988-0868

### 3rd VICE PRESIDENT MEMBER SERVICES

Gayle England 979-7102

Yvonne Knowles 322-8337

Patsy Lewis, Secretary 925-1709

Leslie O'Neil, Treasurer 968-9863

Beverly Sterling 979-7560

### LEAGUE OFFICE

Commerce Center – Suite 806

2027 1st Avenue North

Birmingham, AL 35203-4127

(205)251-2346

<http://www.bham.net/lwvgb/>



## COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE SERVES AS ELECTION MONITORS

The Community Services Committee has completed its fourth election monitoring—this time for the Resident Council Election at Tuxedo Court Public Housing Community. The election was well monitored by League volunteers Betty Likis, Tracy Heard, Rebecca Evans, Sarah McDonald and Rose Packer on March 29th.

This is the fourth such service we have provided for the Housing Authority Birmingham District and Jackie Stephens, HABD Resident Initiatives Specialist and Ralph D. Ruggs, Executive Director of HABD are “extremely pleased” with the League’s impartiality as an independent party. “I couldn’t do it without you,” says Jackie.

For a bit of history: as a result of this election, the new president of Tuxedo Court’s Resident Council, Bennie Jean Williams Cooper, is the daughter of Ruby Williams, longtime welfare rights activist and Resident Council president for some 20 years before her death. This Council election was held in the Ruby Williams Community Center, which was named in her honor.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The League has been asked to monitor elections scheduled through 2001. The next will be held on Friday, June 29, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Southtown Public Housing Community. At least six volunteers are needed for: 9:00 - 12:00; 12:00 to 3:00 and 3:00 to 6:30 p.m. or for the hours that best fit your schedule—whether one or two hours anytime during the day. Call Rose Packer at 592-2729 and “make her day” and the League’s. You’ll be glad you did!

## OZONE COMPLIANCE – NONCOMPLIANCE TOPIC OF APRIL UNIT MEETING

Sam Bell, Meteorologist at the Jefferson County Department of Health spoke at the April Unit Meeting. Mr Bell is coordinator of the Ozone Action Program. The goals of this outreach program are to: (1) inform nearly one million people about the health and economic impacts of the Birmingham ozone nonattainment area; and (2) take action for ozone reduction. Mr. Bell explained the various organizations and guidelines that govern ozone compliance and also the various types of groups that are partners in informing the public about the ozone. Ozone affects health, reduces agriculture, reduces visibility and has an economic impact. The major contributors of ozone are motor vehicles, power plants, factories, consumer and commercial products and fuel combustion processes. There are several things each one of us can do to help reduce the ozone. During the hot summer days think before you get in your car to drive around town by yourself.

## *Happy May Anniversary*

The League appreciates your saving the League the expense of a dues notice by sending your dues (\$40 individual, \$60 family) on seeing this reminder.

Any additional contribution is gratefully received! If you wish to make a tax deductible contribution, it must be by separate check made out to the LWV of Alabama Education Fund.

E.J. Stephens  
Carol and Ken Taylor

# BIRMINGHAM LEAGUERS JOIN THE FRAY

On April 4<sup>th</sup> Birmingham League members ignored the drippy weather to go to Montgomery to participate in the Rally for Constitutional Reform. They carried colorful signs which members and supporters made at a work session held the week before at Dave's Pizza in Homewood.

The crowd was enthusiastic and LOUD in its insistence that a new document was needed. Among those who spoke eloquently to the issue were former Governor Albert Brewer, Secretary of State Jim Bennett, and our own Judge O.L. "Pete" Johnson.

Governor Don Siegelman has finally come on board and is beginning to support a new constitution for our state.

The Reverend Johnnie Green, a Baptist minister and assistant professor of political science at Auburn University, had the crowd offering "Amens" to his assertion that the reform movement is very Christian in that it would surely provide equality and fairness for the most vulnerable of our citizens.

As you know, the LWVAL is currently studying the best method of revision to use. Once consensus is reached among the eight local Leagues, we will be able to work hard for both the end and the means to that end.



**Above left:** (left to right) Dot Baker and Gayle England; **Top:** (left to right) Gayle England, Dot Baker, Betty Likis, Jean Johnson, Jessie Tehranchi, and Sarah McDonald; **Above right:** (left to right) Emilie and Gray Jones of LWV Mobile and Dot Baker, Sarah McDonald, Jessie Tehranchi and Gayle England of the LWVGB.

# MAY CALENDAR

Sat. – Sun., May 5-6 Alabama League of Women Voters State Convention  
Tutwiler Hotel

Sunday, May 6, 2001 Annual Business Meeting  
Tutwiler Hotel

1:30 - 3:30 pm

Board Meeting (date and time has not been determined yet)

**YOU STILL HAVE TIME TO REGISTER FOR THE LVAL CONVENTION  
CALL 967-2829 FOR REGISTRATION INFORMATION.**

THE  
LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN  
VOTERS OF  
GREATER BIRMINGHAM  
COMMERCE CENTER - SUITE 806  
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Birmingham, AL 35203-4127

The  
VOTER

Non-Profit Organization  
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The League of Women Voters is a national, nonpartisan organization, whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation of citizens in government, and to act on selected governmental issues. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. It is financed by membership dues and contributions of interested citizens who realize that the League is the spirit of democracy in action. Membership is open to anyone.